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WE ARE ALASKANS



BOOKS BY  
MARY LEE DAVIS

*Uncle Sam's Attic, the Intimate Story of Alaska*

*We Are Alaskans*

*Alaska, the Great Bear's Cub*





# WE ARE ALASKANS

By

MARY LEE DAVIS

*Author of "Uncle Sam's Attic" and  
"Alaska, The Great Bear's Cub"*

ILLUSTRATED BY AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND SKETCHES BY OLAUS J. MURIE



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**WE ARE ALASKANS**

Printed in the United States of America



TO  
THOSE MANY  
FELLOW-ALASKANS  
SOURDOUGH & CHEECHAKO  
FRIENDS—TRAILMATES—COMPANIONS  
WHO  
LIKE MYSELF  
HAVE LOST THEIR HEARTS  
TO  
*The Last Frontier*  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK





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*Frontispiece.*

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# THE TALLY

FACING NORTH  
WHO ARE WE?



## FACING NORTH

“**A**S for good company, could it be got in such a land of shifts and hardships?” the Gentleman from London asked. “Is it not, rather, uninhabitable by reason of infernal bitter cold and frosty fog? No gentlefolk would ever there inhabit, surely, but red skinned Savages, merchant Adventurers, fanatical Sectaries, or truants in the Law of our good King.”

They said that of New England, in those days. They said it of Penn’s Woods, the Hudson Valley, the Shenandoah, and even of George Calvert’s Maryland. But was it true? Some crazy colonists (or so their neighbors in the Mother Country thought them) decided they would take a chance on the new land, and History now is laughing in her sleeve at stay-at-homes.

—“Of course you found no cultured people in Alaska,” a gentleman in Washington said to me just the other day. “I realize that it is not a white man’s country and that no person in his proper senses would ever choose to live in such a climate. Some traders, I imagine, and a few religious freaks—but mostly wild Red Indians, are they not? Are the few whites there *very* rough fellows—really dangerous, I mean?”

This gentleman had probably been reading *The Sea Wolf* or *The Spoilers*, rich tales of things that happened in the North a generation since. I know, for when I first went North myself to live, I too was

steeped in that opinion and had to unlearn everything! I had no slightest fancy of who the real Alaskans were. In fact, I had much worse than no conception for I was full of scores of misconceptions. I did not have an empty canvas on which to paint impressions, but one already filled and luridly spread over with the highest color. Slowly, through long years of living in the North, summer and winter, intimately, I came to know the truth.

I'd like to share that truth with those who like the truth, and tell you bed-rock fact about the people living in Alaska now—some gossipy, warm, intimate tales about the actual neighbors I have found here. I'd like to speak out from my heart, for I myself am an Alaskan. Although an Eastern woman born, of Scotch and English and some Irish heritage, Alaska is the chosen land of my adoption for I love its space, its climate, and most of all its people. We Alaskans are busy making something here. We do not know just what it is to prove, but the making is infinitely precious to us. I think we feel to-day about Alaska very much as early English colonists once felt about their new America.

In a book called *Uncle Sam's Attic* I tried to tell just why it seems to me that our Alaska is to Uncle Sam to-day, exactly what New England was to Old England a few centuries ago. A fellow-Alaskan from the town of Ketchikan said to me after reading it: "But people are more interesting than places. Why don't you tell about Alaskans themselves and their metamorphosis into real Alaskan residents and citizens—all the sinners who came to scoff and remained to pray: men and women lured to Alaska by the Loot-and-beat-it impulse, remaining and living here now from the Alaska-is-a-good-place motive?"

That's a much more vital theme. And it is factual, as we know. At this point your New England parallel begins and richly illustrates—is stimulating to Alaskan residence. But, of course, *chance* was the primal and the highly advertised lure here, rather than 'Freedom to worship God.' ”

That last is not quite true. Not all the early settlers in New England came because of the religious motive. Many—most, as the later franker histories disclose—came to better themselves financially because of hard times at home. And there was many a true man of God in Alaska before the time of the great gold strikes, and many others came and joined with that stampede, a spiritual leaven.

I realize full well that no historical parallel can ever be exact, for History does not circle, she spirals. Yet an analogy between the story we know well (such as the oft told tale of a New England's founding) and legend we know little (such as the founding of Russian America) illumines many a hitherto unturned dark page of our Alaskan story, crammed with romantic interest. If you are telling people of some friend—and I look on Alaska as my friend—and wish to make them see her truly, you will say: “She is so very much like so-and-so, our mutual friend whom we know well.” Invoking this resemblance will sometimes bring out much that's new and vital, something we could not have discovered or described in any other way. “Comparison is a great evoker of hidden qualities,” it is stated. So, when I say that our Alaskans seem to me just other latter-day New Englanders, doing a similar hard pioneering job with much the same faith in themselves and for their chosen land, I think you'll see my neighbors and my trail mates of the North in

clearer picture.—“ ‘It’s a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,’ the Queen said!”

Not all my friends here are gold seekers or wild adventurers, as not all of the “nest in the Massachusetts” were sober Puritans. Captain Myles Standish was of quite another type—hot tempered scrapper, Indian trader, scout, who sometimes had to be re-proved for his unseemly conduct, you recall. There were some “undesirables” even on the *Mayflower* and many a pagan ghost sat at the Puritan feast. Do you remember sportsman and convivial Thomas Morton of Merry Mount? Compare the ribald English of his Maypole Song for revels with Baránof’s solemn sonorous Russian ode upon the founding of Old Sitka, and you will find that early Alaskan colonist breathing a deep spirit of dedicated fervor to a Cause while the early New Englander’s unpuritan song reeks with a most ungodly zest in heathenry! Governor Endicott raided Merry Mount, it’s true, and “Thomas Morton of Clifford’s Inn, Gent.” sometime was set in stocks upon the Common and ultimately ousted from the Colony. But he swung a wide loop, as Texans say, and had a rare good time while it lasted! It lasted just about as long as did the wide open town and ringing dance hall of Alaska’s Gold Rush; but Fiction has immortalized the mad wild stampede days of Alaska while History’s self has all but mislaid in an operative foot-note that scandalizing free and easy Morton of the pines of Quincy—who ranged the wilderness of Massachusetts Bay, maliciously sold rum and guns to Indians, and plotted cunningly against the Puritan Commonwealth.

When my Ketchikan friend reminds me that New England’s Pilgrims came to worship God, I say to

him: "But there were others!"—others "of beastly practices" who danced drunkenly about their eighty-foot Maypole crowned with buck antlers—others who clasped "Indian lassies in their beaver coats," "frisking together like so many fairies or furies," and sang:

"Make greene garlons, bring bottles out,  
And spill sweet Nectar freely aboute.  
Uncover thy head and feare no harm,  
For here's good liquor to keep it warme."

New England rid herself of Morton and his crew as Alaska long ago rid herself of Soapy Smith and his. But History is not quite fair. She tells such wild tales of the Klondike early days and you and I believe them. She does not have so very much to say about the Mortons of New England, so we forget that even Massachusetts Bay knew "high, wide, handsome" goings on—in its stampede days!

Why have we Alaskans sought Alaska? For as many and perhaps more diverse reasons than those which fetched the Endicotts and Mortons to Massachusetts Bay. A thirst for the far away, the old human land hunger, the desire to be masterless, the wish to escape the crowding economic complex, a will set against regimentation, sheer and clear daredeviltry, a youthful love of new experience and adventure, "the urge that shot the first Norse prow beyond the home fiord"—all these and more have brought us here.

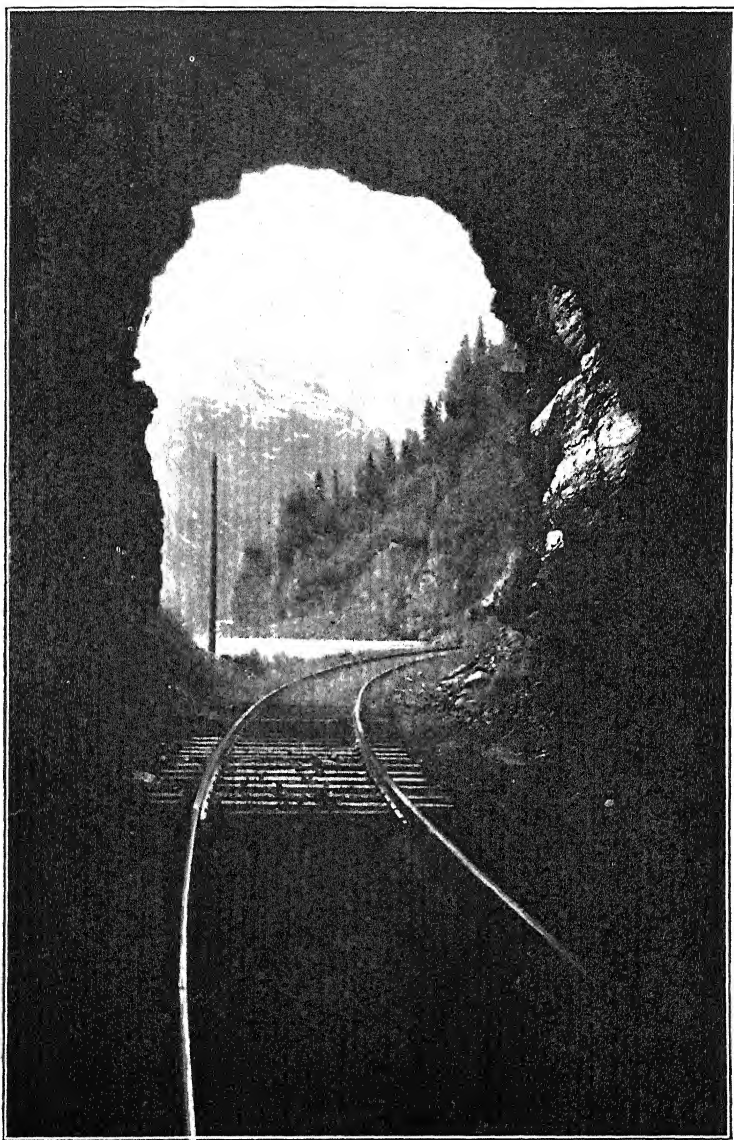
What have we found? Some of us have found virgin gold and some have stumbled on a lode of paying richness more to be desired than much fine gold. There is a curious sameness to the ending of

many an Alaskan's true story of his coming to the North. Sometimes he will say: "Alaska taught me to know myself"; again, "'Twas here I learned to live"; another, at the end of a hair-raising true tale of adventure, "And after that I've never been unhappy, when alone." These are the endings to all true Alaskan stories, wherever and whenever told amongst ourselves around a winter fire, no strangers present. These are but many phrases of one meaning: Here we have come to grips with life and in the clinches and the throws have learned our own true measure. No life is dull, no life is just the same again, after such experiencing. This friend of mine, Alaska, reminds me often of what Goethe said of Winkelmann: "You don't learn something when you read him, you become something." That strikes to the very root of true Alaskans' loyalty to their new land, for it puts into one keen phrase "the supreme creative influence in the world—the contagious touch of great personalities."

"Rough people in the North," you say—"not quite 'our kind'?" Here are my Alaskan friends, some few of them. Meet them yourself and judge: An Eskimo, a Tinneh and a Thlingit, for Alaska was their land long years before we made it ours and they have rooted rights here; a trapper and a woman prospector; a woman big-game hunter, too, for she is the best all-around good sport I've ever met, one who would have become an eminent naturalist, I'm sure, if cast into a different environment; my neighbors of the towns, where I lived several years; my trail mates upon many a crisscrossed trek in vastly spread Alaska.

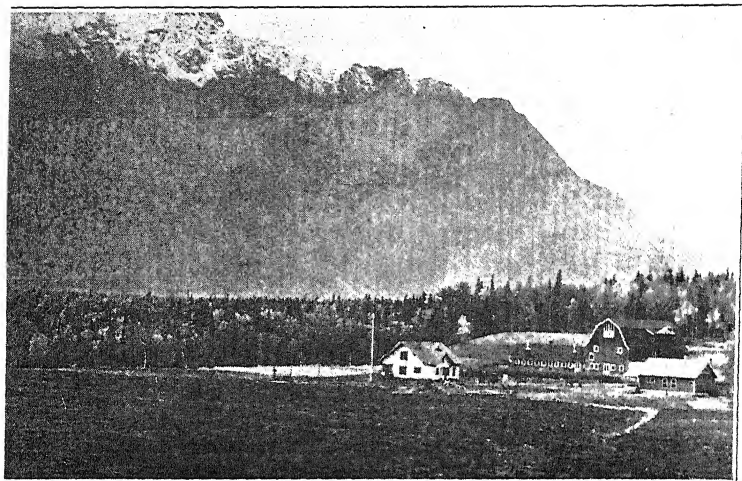
So much—so very much—has been already written in times past about Alaska's men, especially those





*Photograph by Steward.*

THE FIRST WHITE MAN TO CLIMB THIS COPPER VALLEY  
SUFFERED "WEEKS OF DISCOMFORT THAT BEGGARS DESCRIPTION."  
NOW WE ROLL THROUGH ON STEEL.



*Photograph by Cann.*

^ A FARM IN THE MATANUSKA VALLEY.



"WHEN WE OURSELVES CAME NORTH."

men of Gold Rush days, perhaps you will forgive me if I tell here more about her women and my own close friends, the next door neighbors in our little frontier towns. They share the hardships—all of them, if any—and they create the snug-built homes which make the men truly at home here in the North and so able to be true colonials, not mere adventurous scouts of civilization. These women are the builders for her future, as I see it; and because of our Alaskan women's presence here, the shifting restless population of the early gold camps has settled to the slow and steady job of empire building, of digging in. Their courage and their faith not only light the fires of true-named homes here but keep those fires a-burning, a beacon for the home-returning hearts of men.

There remains but one question to be asked—but it is a question you yourself must answer. Not all true Alaskans live to-day in Alaska. As has been jibingly said of Massachusetts, Alaska too is "a state of mind"—a pioneer state of mind. Are you then by any chance an Alaskan?

Do not misunderstand me. I do not urge you to come North seeking the virgin gold. Those wild days of the great stampedes are, fortunately, long past and with them went the flaming dance hall of the North and women of the dance hall type. Gold is still here in plenty, but only for hard winning. Do not come North seeking the rainbow pot of fortune, but rather ask if there is in yourself any of the unrusting, enduring, ductile, precious quality of that true golden mettle—to bear swift hammer blow forever, a foil to fate, without fear of breaking. Are you willing to throw all that tests high of you into the fusion of the North, to submit yourself in

assay here to all its acid, bitter, sometimes cruel and searching reagents?

O Pioneers! If you are of that eagle's breed who busy ever with affairs of the wind, if your eyes have the far-away look and care most to rest on infinite space and unbroken time, if you remember well that "far countries are best sought out by him who is strong within himself"—then come.

And if your racial memory includes fiord, moor, and fen, proud highland or gravid valley, endless spruce forest, roaring canyon, or nameless rivers, then you too will be at home here. If your ancestors learned long generations ago to scorn mere cold, then you too will see a glory and a strength in the tense grip of a mid-Alaskan winter. You will be mindful of sea-roving, moor-faring, distant Beowulf kinsmen, whose heart laughed at the exaggerated peril of a crowding winter dark and a deep winter cold. And you too will come to praise that general misunderstanding of our year-round glorious climate, which best serves to keep out mollicoddles.

Why envy the Pilgrim Fathers their "chance"? If by good fortune you have fallen heir to something far more precious than authentic *Mayflower* furniture, then take your own chance, now. The *Mayflower* sails to-day from many a northward-facing port. Cast in your lot and covenant with this new colony of your own race overseas, claim here your ten square miles of masterless space, and learn for yourself far the best answer to that question, "Who lives in Alaska—and why?"

## WHO ARE WE?

GEOGRAPHIES call Alaska "the land of the Eskimo." That is a handy simple generalization, easy to plant in the youthful mind. Once planted there it stays planted but, like most too facile generalizations about this world we live in, the statement is not accurate.

Some Eskimos do live in Alaska, but in the Arctic section of Alaska only. By far the major portion of this (to me) most fascinating race live elsewhere—and while the Eskimos of North and South Greenland, Baffin Land, Labrador, Siberia, all are different, all are yet alike. To say, therefore, that Alaska is "the land of the Eskimo" is no more true than to say that Massachusetts is the land of the Irish, just because quite a few Irish live there!

At a luncheon several years ago in one of our most cultured eastern states, a lop-comb Black Minorca little woman ruffled up to me with a most embarrassing remark. "I have read your story about our missions in Alaska with such pleasure," she clucked, and fluttered her dark feathers. "I am so interested in the *dear* Eskimos."

I was puzzled, for at that time I had written no Eskimo story nor had I once presumed to add to the already quite voluminous literature of Alaskan missions. At last, however, we found that she had read an article of mine called, "What Does Alaska Want"—in which the word "mission" and the word "Eskimo" were not even mentioned, for it dealt solely with our white Alaskans! But so ingrained

was her long preconception of Alaska as the land of Eskimos, she had simply taken for granted (as perhaps others had done) that in speaking of the people of Alaska one could only be speaking of "the dear Eskimos."

But there are others who must have the selfsame notion. An Alaskan friend was dining with her husband at a Boston hotel. A woman at a nearby table overheard their conversation, became very much interested, and on leaving the dining-room she stopped to speak to them.

"I ask your pardon, but I overheard you speaking of Alaska. Are you missionaries there?"

"Oh, no!" my friend replied. "We are just Alaskans."

"Alaskans? But you do not look like Eskimos. And you use really excellent English!"

Laughing, my friend explained that though she was a teacher born in California and her husband a physician born in Maine, they were now both genuinely Alaskans for they had lived in the Territory many years, had built a home and were raising a family there.

"But I cannot understand," the other insisted. "You cannot be Alaskans, if you are not Eskimos."

My friend, a little nettled, said: "When did your forebears come to Massachusetts, may I ask?"

"With Winthrop, in 1630," the other answered, proudly.

"Very well," was her retort. "After your ancestor had been a Bay Colony man for thirty years, was he an American—or an Algonquian Indian?"

The total population of "The Great Country," as the native word Alaska means, is close to sixty thousand; but only one-half this number are aborig-

inal Eskimo and Indian stocks, while the other half are people of our own white race. The Territory of Alaska to-day, in so far as it has any real political or social status, a commerce, or any future as a possible new state of the Union, is a strayed colony of transplanted Americans who hold in thin and far-flung line a vast section of continental American soil, bought and paid for by American money. You may be amazed to hear it—for neither churches in the States nor public schools nor our own national government seem willing to face this fact squarely—but Alaska to-day is actually inhabited by Alaskans!

Who, then, are this strange race? A happily uncrowded people, for there are almost ten square miles of elbow-room apiece for every man, woman and child of us, white and brown alike, in the land we love to call "God's Pocket." In fact, ours is the least densely populated section of the United States. Almost two-thirds of my white neighbors are American born, a large percentage of them being men whose fathers took the Oregon and Santa Fé trails back in the great days following '49. By question, I have found that a full half of these American born first saw the starry spangled light of dawn in the western half of the U. S. A., home of so-called one hundred per cent. Americanism. Of our Alaskans who are foreign born, some forty per cent. are Scandinavian, about twenty-five per cent. are British, and ten per cent. Teutonic.

Now without any overindulgence in the romantic sophistries of heredity, I ask any cool-headed unbiased observer to look at these figures and then tell me frankly: If you were going shopping for an ideal combination of long-term-investment family stocks—if you tooth-combed the world for them—could you

find any people better suited than are these for new colonial building? There are no unassimilable foreign-born blocs here; but to a wholesome majority of true home-country stuff raised in the most stable and temperate American sector, through an ideal process of natural selection many other ingredients of the finest settler type have, by the lavish hand of chance, been added to us here—people with those traits of dogged self-reliance and a necessary ingenuity in meeting unaided the difficult situation, quite as vital to the pioneer in this new America as in a former new England.

Under the Scandinavian I have toted up the sum of those from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland—realizing full well that the Finlander is from a different ethnic stock, but feeling that he should be grouped with these as coming from essentially the same climatic home environment and bringing to us for our use and comfort the same high grade of potential citizenship, the same engrossment with the arts of peace, the same racial contribution to the science and the knowledge of mankind, and the same true love for an adopted soil. Among my own most near and dear friends in the North have been two sisters come from Finland who, by their fine integrity and rich sense of housewifely craft, have taught me—all unconsciously themselves, in our long years of close association—many a quiet effective lesson in loyalty, in patience, as well as orderly and happy living in the midst of an often quite disordered environment. Finland is one part of Europe, I regret to say, I've never been to; and yet through this dear friendship I feel I know it strangely well—better perhaps than many a European city whose buildings I have seen with my own eyes,



whose streets I've walked upon, yet felt myself a stranger there. A certain farmstead by a moor and lake in Finland is like another home to me, though I have never actually set foot inside its lintel. I know its friendly walls, I know its household routine and the busy work-life of its people. Dear capable Alma and dainty sweet-voiced Sylvia have made that far off farmstead truly mine. What further richness can one ask of friendship, than such a personal loyalty combined with gifts of insight into other folk-ways, lands, and peoples?

Added to those who are now genuine Alaskans though born in Scandinavian countries, are many more who are of true Norse stock but who have come to us from farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin, from tote roads and shanty trails of the Saginaw. Three-fourths of our true Norsemen were attracted here by the extensive fisheries, and so have made their homes beside Alaska's ocean shore. These men and women seem to me ideal sub-Arctic colonists, inured to cold and the exposure of such occupations as the halibut fisheries by multitudinous hardships of both sea and mountainside, accustomed through long centuries of adaptation to the combined work of fishing-herding-farming. As one Alaskan Swede has put it, "I'd like to see more thousands of these hardwood Finns get hold of land up here, for homestead purposes—more pretty farmhouses built alongside our rivers and mountains, resting in the peaceful sleep of late evenings with the gold of a northern sun flowing over it all. Give Alaska half a chance and it will very soon be in population what it already is obviously on the map—the Scandinavian Peninsula of America!"

Out of Scandinavia have come like wind-blown pollen not only a vast number of our best American

migrants—almost equal now, with their descendants, to the present home population of Scandinavia's self—but world-wide cultural influences in music and in literature, democracy and peace. These children of the North have a most wholesome regard for hard-won political liberty, they demand and give simple hard work in public life—no frills!—and their rooted dignity and pacific spirit prove a sane balance in any civic body. They are helping us found here our forty-ninth state, built by a new group of Forty-niners high above the forty-ninth parallel. My North-born friends are racially toned down already to withstand the electric surcharged atmosphere of our long winters, and there are many things which you perhaps might miss here but the Scandinavian does not. He is already quite at home in the High North, and finds again in our Alaska all his old gods—Thor's strength and Balder's summer sunlight beauty, Odin's wisdom, Freya's undying charm.

Neighboring Canada supplies a large proportion of our British-born Alaskan settlers and many of the Canadian contingent prove to be of genuine Scotch blood. There is another group from Canada—to me a very significant group—those who are direct descendants of our own very earliest American colonists themselves, the Tories of New England who were dispossessed and ousted into New Brunswick and New Scotia by our own "red" revolutionary forebears when on a rampage a sesqui-centennial ago. Recently I had a hand in organizing our Alaskan Chapter of the D. A. R., and found that many of the women I knew to be of "purest American stock" were born in the Bluenose Provinces of Canada—lost cousins come back to us! Here is a reciprocity across old spiritual frontiers, of vital and untaxed

values. Some of Alaska's best citizens to-day come from Saint John, that most British Canadian colony; but, though their twice-great-grandfathers truly "fit" in the American Revolution, that fighting proved to be on the wrong side to entitle them to be "daughters," even though Woodrow Wilson paid their ancestors one of his very finest tributes: "Not a little poise, not a little of the sentiment of law, not a little of the solidity of tradition and the steadiness of established ways of thought and action, not a little of the conservative strength of the young communities had gone out of the country with the Loyalists—not a little of the training, the pride of reputation, the compulsion of class spirit, the loyalty and honor of a class accustomed to rule and to furnish rulers." In Canada, before the American Revolution, there were but 6,000 British settlers. The Loyalists who came over added just 6,000 more! These people bring with them to our Alaska a long tradition in colonial affairs, for they have helped to build New England, have added to the vim of growing Canada, and now have come to aid us here. We need them.

Our Canadian group also includes many of French blood (especially among the Catholic sisterhoods who teach and nurse here) as well as the fine old breed of French-Canadian prospector and trapper. Canadians include too all that generation of born Americans who went to Dawson in '98 during the Klondike strike, became British citizens in "Y. T." and, when the Alaska gold-fields opened, were later repatriated with us. I know several Alaskans who bear this odd boundary-crossed escutcheon.

Of our strictly English born, many are among the oldest timers of the early Yukon trading camps of the Hudson Bay Company and date back in Alaskan

history and experience more than forty years, even before those stirring days of the Klondike '98. Not a few of Alaska's most daring trail breakers, most successful business and professional men, spring from that old bulldog breed as true to type here in the North as elsewhere. Nor will it surprise any one who knows the long story of Anglo-Saxon migrations, to learn that most of our English born have come originally from Yorkshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall.

When I myself first came to Interior Alaska, it seemed to me that every other acquaintance I made was of Irish birth, a double score of colorful and picturesque personalities. Perhaps this first impression came from the fact that, as Jim Tully says, "The Irish do not keep the gates of friendship closed until they find that one is worthy to enter!" Yet actually there are more Irish in our far, vast, sparsely settled, Mississippi-like Middle North than in any of its more populous coast sectors. This un-normal Celtic migration over the high forbidding mountain chain may be due to the natural Celtic dislike of doing what the crowd is doing, a horror against belonging to the majority, however formed; or perhaps it is that the true Irish heart is always open to both beauty and wonder. I know no other reasons to account for the cold fact, but Ireland is certainly unique as the one country which has sent more of her men to our difficult, austere, yet to me most loved and lovely inland section, than to any other.—Of course it goes without saying that these western-world sons of Erin are, to a man, deeply engaged in play-boy politics here! Yet, when all is said that can be said against the Celt in politics, the fact remains that you will always find him sensing men in close, human,

clannish groups and dealing with them as real people, not cogs. Your Irishman brings heart to the heart of any land—a flavor, a gust for life. We need him, too, in our new colony.

The Russian element in Alaska, though numerically insignificant, runs through our people like a subtle chemical trace caused by long historic association and close geographic contiguity. Really it is much more pervasive than any mere census return will ever show, for in the early days of Alaska's exploration period the "Russ man" was for long the dominant factor here and freely left his strain intermingled with both French and Native. While to the casual tourist of to-day there may seem little residue of Slav, any really serious approach to Alaska soon uncovers that Russian past, so hidden on the surface of event, moving ever from beneath. It is a yeasty bitter ferment, wholesome if not too little blent, too slightly baked. "In Russia," Gorki says, "even the fools are sometimes wonderful!" Many of our Alaskan vagaries inherit that quality back Asiaward.

They came here with less of geographical displacement, with more direct historical continuity, than did any of us Saxons. In a very real sense the land here was truly theirs—"East Russia," "New Russia," "Russian America." They pioneered it in the old hard days. They won it. At least they held a hand strong enough to bluff the empire-snatching British to a showdown! We Americans, so far, have merely paid our cash, have merely executed a legal real estate transfer. We have not as yet made the land spiritually ours, although this generation in Alaska is groping toward just that.

There are several thousand school-age white chil-

dren in Alaska to-day and many of these are Alaska-born, real Sons and Daughters of the Golden North. A balanced population is being carved out normally and naturally by the old census tools of birth and mating and death; for while of white Alaskans over forty years of age more than ten thousand are men and less than two thousand are women, in the group between twenty and forty years there are seven thousand young men and three thousand young women—just a good healthy balance for a working competition, so any eugenicist would say! And of the whites under twenty, half are boys and half are girls, to share with equally strong shoulders the new burden of our New North.

So the old story of the pioneers goes on repeating, producing here a fresh stem and new graft on the old common stock of America: real Alaskans born and bred in the new Nordland, whose mind and character for good or ill are solely now the product of this new frontier—The Frontier where environment proves ever too strong at first for heredity, and so will inevitably brand its mark upon them. Children of colonials and citizens to the soil, these are the men and women of Alaska's to-morrow who will in time truly master the land and make it theirs—in time united here, possibly by some common antagonism, probably by a common tradition, but almost certainly by the pervasive infection of a great common undertaking: the settlement of The Great Country and its ultimate adaptation to the needs of civilized men.

And we are growing, too. My own town of Fairbanks has almost doubled since 1920; the great Interior of Alaska, hidden behind the ranges, gained thirty per cent. in the last decade; and Alaska as a whole increased its people seven per cent. for 1920—

1930—a greater increase than was shown by such fine states as Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas, Montana or Idaho! Juneau and Ketchikan are little cities of four thousand each. Anchorage and Fairbanks rate two thousand, although the creek mines about Fairbanks (its suburbs!) add nearly fifteen hundred more; Petersburg, Nome, Sitka, Cordova, Wrangell hold each about a thousand people, while many other towns and scattered hamlets complete the frontier picture of growing population. We are not lonely folk, we know good fellowship.

What do we do? There are one hundred and twelve farms near Fairbanks, though our people are mostly miners, trappers, business and professional men. We are a busy lot as you will realize when I tell you that every man, woman and child in Alaska produces and exports each year, home products of an average value of more than a thousand dollars, importing about half that much in way of trade. Alaska has a growing surplus in her Territorial treasury, no funded debt. "Alaska is cold, hostile, unproductive," do you say? Why man alive—Hawaii, which you think of as a garden spot on earth, with six times as many people as we number, produced last year only one-third as much per person as did our Alaskans. We are not lotus eaters here, but busy hustling American citizens. Anyway, we are as much citizens as are the people living in the District of Columbia, for we too are mere wards of government—and while we aren't allowed to vote for President we are allowed to pay our U. S. taxes, if that be any citizenly comfort!

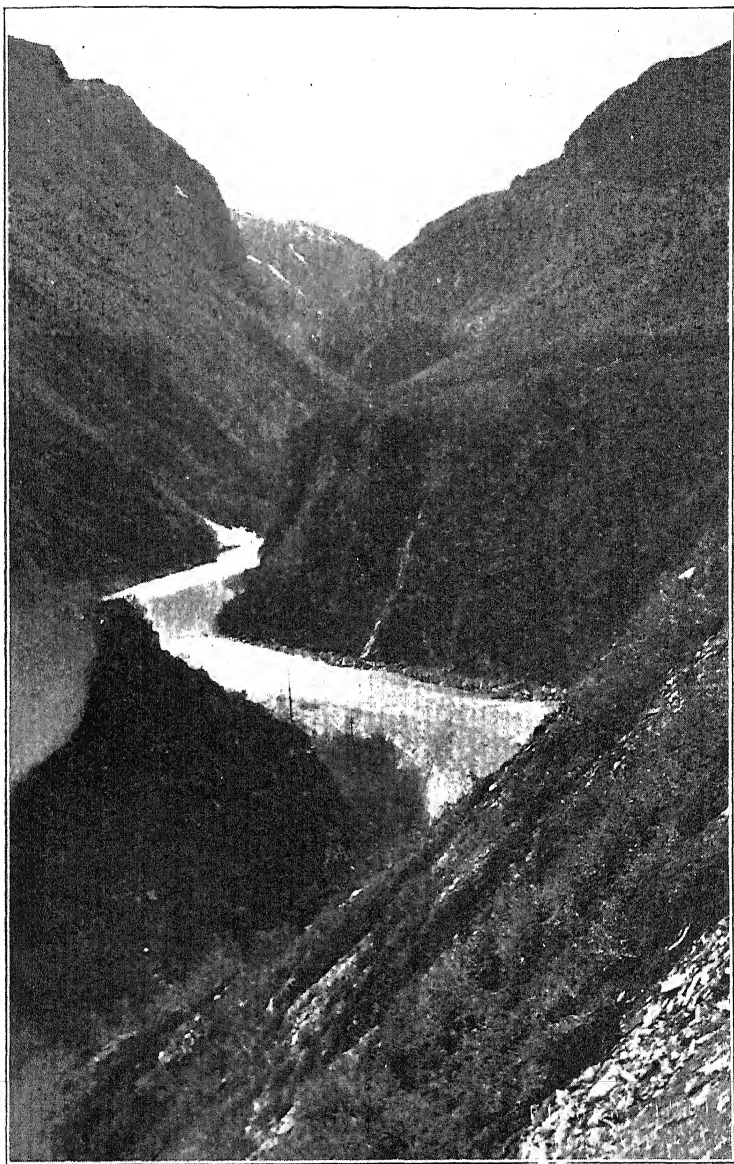
We Alaskans mine gold, silver, copper, and many

other precious needed metals. We fish for salmon, halibut, and scores of other finny things—a kind of mining of the sea, a kind of hunting by water. We hunt—for meat, not sport—and when you've eaten mountain-sheep chops, you'll know why! We trap some of the finest pelts sold in the fur markets—more than a quarter million skins shipped out in 1929, exclusive of the forty thousand fur-seals sent from Pribilof—a total fur value of over five million dollars. We try experiments with raising musk-ox, yak and buffalo; we herd reindeer and ship tons of that good meat yearly to the States; we build fur ranches for foxes of all colors, for mink and other precious peltries; we log out timber, dress it, build great wood-pulp mills; we raise fine dairy herds as well as thick-wooled sheep.

We know that wheat is the best frontier crop of all new lands, for it transports so well; and we know, too, that wheat's production center is always moving further west and north—because we have ourselves helped to push it there! We garden and we raise chickens, we gather twenty kinds of luscious wild-grown berries, we live high in the sun-drenched summer on mushrooms and on grayling; we build our houses, barns, stores, canneries. And we build roads—for we have read our history books and know that empire builders always think in terms of "getting there." We don't build roads of tarmac or of concrete—no death-trap speedways. But we build miles of roads that cars can travel on with comfort and utility. In fact, if I were asked I'd say unqualifiedly, "Road builders are Alaska's most helpful citizens, to-day."

The tortuous trail blazed by the pioneer was difficult to follow. Back-breaking toil that men who





*Photograph by Fisher.*

"ROAD BUILDERS ARE ALASKA'S MOST HELPFUL CITIZENS TODAY."



"AMONG MY OWN MOST DEAR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH HAVE BEEN  
TWO SISTERS FROM FINLAND."



SOMETIMES WE HUNT MOOSE WITH GUN OR CAMERA.  
SOMETIMES WE MAKE CAMP PETS OF THEM.

mushed afoot must suffer, held back our land from settlement for many years. There would be many more of us Alaskans here to-day if roads—not trails—had been more common when most of us first came here. To-day, the old trails have made way for new: well graveled auto roads, steel ribbons for steel trains to slide upon and—best of all, at higher and at smoother elevation—the new blazed airways of the North.

The latest of Alaskan pioneers are airport builders, pilots and mechanics, blazing the new undaunted way into High North.





# THE INNUIT

ESKIMO BUTTERFLY  
THE WAYS OF MUK-PI



## ESKIMO BUTTERFLY

**W**HEN I came to live in Alaska I expected to have only brown Eskimos for neighbors. Instead, I found myself in a Main Streeted mining-town tucked down just under the Arctic Circle and with a thousand-odd white and genuine American fellow citizens. I found myself also the source of no little amusement to these new friends when I asked of them in bewilderment: "But where are the Eskimos?" They told me that I might stay on in Fairbanks many years and never see an Eskimo.

But on a sharp and frost-etched morning of my first winter in the North, walking the streets of our frontier town briskly intent on my Christmas marketing, I glimpsed a little woman so exotically furred, in a silky soft parka of silver muskrat hooded deeply in a ruff of gray-black wolf, that I followed her for blocks, fascinated, forgetting the cold.

Next day our local newspaper put a new edge to my sharpened interest, for it described how an Eskimo woman had newly come to Our Town, from the farthest north of Herschel Island, with a certain Captain Fergus, a man well known in the Arctic as notorious adventurer, trader, explorer, daredevil sailor, and dog-musher. In temperatures that for days would slip to sixty below zero and cling there, these two human bits of drift had won their lonely way across the winter wastelands which lie between us and the all-frozen sea—a trail, as they had come, of nearly a thousand miles. The Eskimo girl was a native of Nome, far away to the westward,

and had set out with this Fergus into the still farther north, as "cook and seamstress" on one of his extended expeditions. When *The News-Miner* ended its account with the statement that these strangers had made temporary quarters in the old Sliskovitch cabin, I resolved to go there at once and see face to face a true Eskimo.

But it was Captain Fergus and not the girl whom I first saw as I stepped quickly inside from the sharp cold of that December midday. He was a man desperately tall; and I who all my life have suffered from most unwomanish height, never before had felt the sense of such an overpowering size in any human creature. His black head brushed the fur mittens and drying mukluks dangling from the ridge-pole; his great arms reached low. He seemed Jack London's Sea Wolf, come to life there. And his eyes were burned and dark with some curdled murk of hate. I do confess that for one first swift moment I knew the salty taste of fear.

But the little copper woman slipped from out the corner shadows of the room and spoke to him, as we two white folk stood there in the dumb instinctive appraisement of mutual dislike.

"You make talk, now, this lay-dee? I go." She stood close by me, so very tiny in her heelless mukluks. But I hurried to answer for him. "Don't go! I came to talk to *you*. I came to ask about the pretty parka I saw you wearing yesterday."

I stepped aside to let the man pass out, nor did I turn to look, for with his going the picture suddenly became real. Her dark eyes glowed upon me, her oval face of bronze was lighted by a smile as soft, as sweet, as that of Madame Butterfly. She fluttered about the cramped cabin, first to arrange a bale of



furs for me to sit upon, then to thrust still more wood into the Yukon stove—with generous intent, although the tiny room was already smothering hot—and finally to pour me tea, with a murmur of the cold which lay in wait without the dusky small-windowed walls. All this she did with a charm that was oriental and quaint, with flick of small deft hands, with swift trippings of tiny fur-sandalled feet.

Oriental was true word for her. Even her broken, tumbled, staccato English caught some echo of an Asiatic rhythm. Swathe her fragile dignity in luxurious kimono folds, give those eloquent hands a fan to flutter, and this wee thing was surely another Butterfly. Yet only yesterday she had overcome a thousand miles of death-ridden Arctic trail, and was unwearied.

"You first white lay-dee, come, my cabin. White lay-dee drink, all time, tea, Captain Fergus he say. Captain Fergus and Muk-pi go, from Nome, five year, now. My brother live, all time, Nome. My sister, Nome. Very good girl, my sister. One, two, sister. One, two, brother. Very long time, no see, brother."

She tossed back her small dark head with a brave, gay gesture.

"Lay-dee go, some time, Nome, maybe? Nome, very good place. My people, Innuits, live all time, Nome. My brother, all time make cut, ivory, walrus tooth, what-you-call mas-to-don. My brother all time fish, hunt, make trap. Captain Fergus, he come, he say my brother—'Tuk-tuk, Chick-em, I take Muk-pi, maybe, my boat, long time. We catch plenty seal, plenty silver fox, plenty you-call sable. Muk-pi make cook, Muk-pi make sew, Muk-pi make learn plenty, white people way. Muk-pi learn, all

time, speak, white people. Muk-pi learn all time, make count, white people. White people money, how do!' "

She broke again from this quick and tumbled speech into a smile that fairly covered me.

"You see?" she cried, "now I go back, my people. I speak, very good, white people talk. My brother, very much please. Captain Fergus, very good man. Captain Fergus give, my brother, big white people money. Captain Fergus very good friend, my people, Inuit. Captain Fergus very good friend, Muk-pi. He stay Nome, all time, now."

This world rover, this wolf of seven seas—good, kind, and friendly? Never, I thought. But I must make some answer to all this glowing speech, and at last I ventured: "Muk-pi, if you are going back to Nome so soon, why not let me buy your parka? I'll pay you good white-people gold money for it, if you will sell it to me."

"Muk-pi Fergus, my name, long time," she parried. "You like him, parka? Muk-pi make. Hunt plenty muskrat, Mackenzie River. Hunt wolf, hunt wolverine. Make trap, kill. Make pickle, tan. Cut, sew, make parka. Captain Fergus say, all time, 'Skookum muskrat-belly parka.' Muk-pi make mukluk, very good. Walrus, reindeer, mukluk."

"Yes, I know, Muk-pi Fergus. Very good parka. That's why I want it, because you did it all yourself. I give you gold money."

"My people," she repeated—"I go, now, plenty soon. Very glad see Muk-pi, long time. Captain Fergus give big present, my people. Muk-pi Fergus no sell him parka. Muk-pi Fergus no take, white people money. Captain Fergus get plenty money, all time. Winter parka, him. We go Nome, now."

Muk-pi wear winter parka, all time. No sell him, lay-dee!"

The child-woman smiled up into my eyes. Her eyes smiled, too. Almost, I felt, the little hands that fluttered toward me to aid the fluttering broken speech, they too smiled to me. It was so evident that she was hurt to have to say this "no," her oriental courtesy so grieved to refuse any friendly request. She stood before me, seeking my eyes, and begging as woman to a woman that I understand. She was going back now to her people, in a glory of accomplishment, travelled, educated, with rare knowledge of the world, enriched. Surely I, blundering forthright Saxon though I was, must understand that she could never sell me this parka—her one suitable winter garment that had been wrought at such pains—when the royal home-coming was so soon to be made.

Was "Muk-pi Fergus" really her name? Such traders sometimes married with her people, I had heard. It was good business policy, for it gave them the inside, the edge, in a deal. And affairs of commerce all aside, who could fail to be charmed by this grace, this courtesy, this slave-like devotion, this utter and selfless giving? Perhaps some whiteness in him, hidden deep from my white woman's eyes, really cared for and was bound in loyalty to this bit of tempered beautiful copper. Since it was all too evident, now, that the lovely parka was not for me, I rose to go.

"O lay-dee, no go! I *like* make talk, white lay-dee. *Nice* white lay-dee!" The soft voice coaxed and the small hands, wonderfully strong, all but forced me to a seat again. "All time, so many year, no lay-dee. Plenty man. Sailor man, man-look-find-

gold, man-make-trap. No lay-dee. I like make lay-dee talk. Please?"

Talk! She told of the much-loved brothers in Nome, one a skilled cutter of ancient ivory—mammoth and fossil walrus—the other a hunter on the frozen winter seas, whose kill was of hair seal and the great white polar bear. She told of her two sisters, O-ti-ouk and Maw-graw-gee, and their children. She told of her own years upon the Arctic slope—the going eastward, eastward, along the dreary Arctic slope until finally that strange people the explorers called "blond Eskimo" were found.

"Blonde, like I am, Muk-pi Fergus?" I asked, and pointed to my yellow hair and blue eyes.

"No, no!" she smiled, very much amused. "No, no! Hair like Muk-pi. Skin like Muk-pi. Big, big nose—like lay-dee."

But my nose isn't big! I showed surprise and perhaps offense. She was quick to see this and quick, too, to make her swift amends.

"My people—my people very bad. My people some time make laugh, big nose, white people. Very bad, make laugh."

She was so disarming. Of course *they* had no real noses at all, those oriental folk who had once crossed the so-narrow straits from Asia. Our noses must indeed seem enormous to them, an exaggerated Cyrano deformity!

She told, too, of the traps for rare silver foxes this Fergus had set and how, after catching but one, no others would come to them. She explained patiently how it had been "so fon-nee"—he had forgotten to cut the tendons in the slain fox's legs. I did not understand, so she explained it all again to me, amazed at my stupidity, but courteous always.

"Captain Fergus, he one time catch very good fox. He kill. But, lay-dee, he no cut him string, in leg. He no tie, him mouth. Fox—you call him ghost, maybe—run away, quick, with him good leg. Fox ghost make talk, him people. Him mouth, Captain Fergus no tie. Him eye, all time see. Fox ghost talk all time, so, him people. 'White man, come. He catch. Take plenty care, my fox people.'

"We go other country. Muk-pi make him trap. Muk-pi catch him fox. Muk-pi kill. Quick, cut him string, in leg! Quick, tie him mouth, tight! Quick, shut him eye! Good. Now he no run, now he no talk, him people—no see, white man, make him trap. All time, we catch plenty good fox, *him* same place."

Surely, even the ignorant white lay-dee could understand such simple magic? Out of my own childhood and remembered fairy tale, I clearly saw its truth and its reality.

During the holiday interest of the weeks that followed my call upon the little Eskimo, plus the new work of Red Cross organization for the women of all transmontane Alaska—a job which had recently been put on me—I completely lost track of the small alien woman. I never saw her upon the street, I had given up all hope of securing the lovely parka; and although I often thought of her, for something that was hers had caught upon my heart strings, it was to imagine her already and long since departed over the snows again, and now safely with her own people.

So January slipped into the brief days of February, a winter-lost sun came dazzling back again to our long-dark world of winter night, and the white snow gleam now blinded us in the blaze of vernal March. Then I answered a faint knock at my cabin door one

day, to discover small Eskimo Muk-pi standing there, clad in her faded blue denim house-parka, the muskrat coat held child-wise in her arms. She entered slowly, a very quiet and dim little figure, all the once-gay twitter and flutter and bird-like grace quite gone. She held out to me the long-coveted garment, with a wistful question in her searching eyes.

"You buy him parka, now, maybe?" Then sensing my surprise at this offer, after that once so definite refusal, she answered it very simply. "Muk-pi, long time, no eat."

"But my child," I cried, taking the heavy fur and laying it swiftly by, "do you mean to say you haven't *eaten*? How long? And where is Captain Fergus? Doesn't he provide for you? Why didn't he take you back to Nome?—Wait. This talk is foolish. You are hungry."

I filled a big bowl each of milk and crackers and brought them to her where she sat drooped upon the couch. I knelt beside while she ate and drank slowly, as I insisted she must do.

"You buy him parka, lay-dee?" she asked at length, both bowls now empty.

"Yes—yes, indeed—if you wish it, Muk-pi Fergus. My name is Davis, Mrs. Davis. Don't you want to call me that? And tell me, Muk-pi, where is Captain Fergus?"

"He go way, long time. He take him fox skin, marten skin. He say, 'I go, make trade. Plenty money.' He no come, long time."

"But, Muk-pi, aren't you his wife? He can't go away and leave you like that, with nothing. Do you mean to say he left you here without food, or money, or credit at the store? Tell me. We have a law, you know, for men like that."

But the little bronze woman, searching my indignant eyes, broke in upon my questioning. "No, no, lay-dee, please, Mississ Day-vees. No say bad word, Captain Fergus. No make law talk, Captain Fergus. Him very good man. Leave grocery, meat, wood, him cabin. All go, now, long time. Something bad make happen, Captain Fergus. Sedna, old sea-woman, maybe catch him. He go, now, long time, make trade. No come.

"All time Muk-pi make song—make song, all time, my people. Song, make all time warm, here, lay-dee!" And she laid a wee brown hand across her poor too-long-empty girth. "Make song, no hon-gree, no catch him big pain, here!" And she smiled across to me for the first time—that swift, infectious, lovely smile of hers. She was half child, and half an oriental woman.

"But, Muk-pi, he is your husband, and he is well known here. Listen to me, now. You go to-day to the Company Store and say: 'I'm Muk-pi Fergus, wife of Captain Fergus, and I must have groceries. You know Captain Fergus, long time. He has plenty fur, he has good boat, good placer claims. You give me groceries, now. Captain Fergus will pay, when he comes back.'—You see?"

"Lay-dee, Mississ Day-vees, my people, Innuít, no make husband all same, white people. White people, very long trail, my people. White people all same Uk-na-vik-na-muit. Place-on-other-side-other-side-people. No, no, lay-dee. Innuít no make him husband, all same, white people make him, husband. Captain Fergus no make, Mission husband, Muk-pi. No make, Bible husband, Muk-pi. Make husband, Innuít, all same my people. Company Store, no time know, maybe, my people way, make husband."

Well, there it was, simple enough, and in a nutshell.

She wriggled her drying feet over the warm air of the register in pleased physical comfort. She looked up at me shyly, to learn if by any chance I had taken offense at being called a stranger, one of the people living in villages far beyond—I, the tall, white, alien woman to whom so many simple things must be explained.

I felt no compunction now in buying that parka, for I knew that the money would mean life and warmth and food. And with April near, the lighter house-parka would be sufficient warmth to this cold-inured little body, even for out of doors. I made her promise to buy fuel and food, and to come back to me again in any difficulty whatsoever. She left, smiling up to me.

"Muk-pi catch Captain Fergus, now, maybe, him cabin. One good day, he come."

"One good day, he'll come!" That, then, was the song, a song of Muk-pi's people, too—the old, old song to warm the hearts of weary women who wait, world over. I remembered so well how I had listened to it last, that very song pouring out from the frame of hushed and shadowed crimson gold: a song that had filled the dark spaces of the opera house—a stipple of white and upturned faces drinking in its liquid beauty, with caught breath drinking in its pathetic, wistful, tragic beauty: Butterfly's song.

Soon I was surely to know that Muk-pi could not by any chance be happy here with us; for in a long talk with a dog-musher friend—to whom Fergus on leaving had sold his Siberians—I learned that the man had set out definitely for the States, though he might possibly return to Nome some time later. So



I hunted out Muk-pi in her cabin that very day, bringing with me a strange burden for an Eskimo call—a great bundle of Red Cross wool and knitting needles.

"Look, Muk-pi," I cried, "did you ever try to knit?"

"'Nit,' Mississ Day-vees? I no see him, 'nit.'"

"It's this way, Muk-pi. All the women of Alaska are making socks and sweaters—warm things, knit, with these needles. See? So-fashion. I am so busy, every day, telling about our Red Cross, I've no time left at all, to knit, myself. Now, you learn to knit and do my share for me while I am writing, and I'll pay you good gold money for each pair of socks you make. It's March now. April, May, and in the middle of June the first boat will maybe be going down the river, Muk-pi—our big river that goes almost to Nome. You can take the boat, then, and go back to your own people. Do you see? Make much money knitting socks, buy ticket, and go to Nome, first boat."

I was so happy over this scheme of mine and it seemed so very simple and practical. But her usually responsive face remained a blank.

"Captain Fergus, lay-dee, he no make find, him Muk-pi, this place—Muk-pi go boat, all time, Nome. How come, lay-dee, Mississ Day-vees?"

"Muk-pi," I said, and though I stretched the truth I thought it justified in such a friendly cause, "Captain Fergus make talk one man this place—old friend, mush dogs many days, old times, together. You see? Captain Fergus say this man: 'I go Nome, this summer.' This man say to me: 'Mrs. Davis, you know Muk-pi, Innuít girl? You tell her Captain Fergus he say: "I go Nome, this summer."'"

The lithe brown hands reached eagerly and caught up the ball of khaki wool.

"How come you make him, nit?" she cried. "You good girl, lay-dee, you make show him Muk-pi, quick, how make him, nit!"

I verily believe that no one in the history of the World War learned to knit in such record time as did my Muk-pi. It was no credit to the teacher, for I am at best a clumsy and a plodding knitter. But with her, it flew. And as the snows melted on the hills above camp, as the creeks broke bank and at last the great Yukon and the Tánana flowed free, so too my sparse bank balance melted away in the flowing stream of Muk-pi's beautifully knitted socks.

When she left us on the first down-Yukon boat for Nome it was a hard parting for us both, as we had no notion then that the Fates had planned for our trails to cross again, in that far-stretched empty Alaskan world of ours. But almost on the very day of her departure my husband received word from Washington to examine for the government, at once, some reported tin deposits near Lost River, on Bering Strait, beyond Nome. So that we found ourselves leaving also for Nome on board the very next boat.

Nome has no harbor, but lies sprawled along a straggling low shore-line. Vessels anchor outside and passengers are lightered in. So we were dropped over the side of the *Victoria* and were finally deposited in the little town.

Suddenly, as we started to walk up one of the now half-deserted streets, a human avalanche fell upon us. We were surrounded, caught, bombarded. Shrill cries, yelps of excited dogs, children, screams—and out of the midst of it came Muk-pi herself, a little

human dynamo, clutching me, clinging to me. We were entirely surrounded by a group of perhaps thirty broadly grinning Eskimos—men, women, children—and dogs!

"My people!" Muk-pi cried, embracing this whole mob in a sweeping gesture of happy introduction. "Mississ Day-vees, Mis-taire Day-vees, my people. My brother, Tuk-tuk. My brother, Chick-em. My sister, Maw-graw-gee. My sister, O-ti-ouk. My sister, bay-bee. My brother, bay-bee. All, my people!—How come, you go Nome, lay-dee? How come? Good, very good, you go, Nome. You live, now, all time, my people."

"Oh, no, Muk-pi! We haven't come to stay. We are on our way north, perhaps up into the Arctic. How come, you meet boat? You didn't look for us. No one knew we were coming."

"Captain Fergus say, he go Nome, summer. Muk-pi, my people, go see. White man boat, come. Captain Fergus, no come." She looked at me, with question, and I answered hurriedly, "But you mustn't expect him on the very first boat from Outside, little Muk-pi. There are three months more of summer, before the last boat. And he may be coming on any one of them."

So we were escorted to our hotel by the thirty trailing Natives, much to the assembled amusement of the town. When Muk-pi found that we were to be in Nome for several days, securing a boat and provisions for our northern trip, she arranged that I was to spend each morning with her and her people who lived out on the Sand-spit beyond the white man's town. She knew that I was interested in their tiny cabins on the isolated sand-spit, the shifting communities of visiting families, piled together on that

wind-blown beach, living in apparent helter-skelter, housekeeping handily under the shelter of their propped-up umiaks—the freight-boats or woman-boats in which they have travelled with their families, plus numerous dogs, time immemorial; and do so travel, even to-day, from Asia to America and return.

Later, along the shores of Port Clarence, we often saw them with dogs hitched to crowded umiaks, as a mule would be hitched to a canal-boat, and yelping joyously as they ran in swift teams along the beach. Sometimes the skin boat the dogs were towing boasted an improvised sail—also of skin; and the crew would be singing and laughing and shouting, all in wild clamor. More families of the happy Innuít going visiting—a gay and friendly lot. Even the very dogs, rushing down the curve of the beach margin in a scurry of pebble and foam, grinned and yelped to us, in passing.

Muk-pi made it a matter of pride that I should see every individual Native on her Sand-spit and interview any that I cared to, through her friendly offices as interpreter; certainly be introduced to them as her friend from that far, strange interior—beyond the land of the A-koo-luk-pug-a-mut, the Big Tunda People, eastward—the inner land of which they were indeed childishly curious but one which they had never known, nor cared personally to know.

For, impossible as it seems to us who so love the sun and a land of grass and of trees, theirs is a tundra culture, exclusively and by choice. They truly love and cling by real affection to their reindeer-moss-land, where the moors stretch out ever to the eastward, where the eight-months-frozen sea yields hard-won meaty harvest, and the great slate-gray head-

lands, upsprung from the bird-screaming rocks, are unpainted with any living touch of green; are undraped even by the softening blue of atmosphere, in the clear and stark white northern light.

Muk-pi insisted upon measuring me for a pair of mukluks, which the three sisters together planned to make for me. Mukluks are boots which extend to a point just below the knee, the upper parts being made of reindeer and the sole of walrus hide. There was a great chatter about it between Muk-pi, her sisters, and the brothers too who stood by to give advice. The whole matter was conducted in that constant click and clack and cluck of most unsilent hard Arctic c's, inevitable, apparently, to every word of their speech.

A great strip of walrus hide was laid out upon the ground and I was told to put my stockinged foot upon it. I did, and Muk-pi then drew an outline about an inch beyond the actual foot. This margin would be turned up all around to form a water-proof sole, *after* the edges had been well chewed to pliability by Muk-pi, O-ti-ouk, and Maw-graw-gee. For that, so they assured me, was the only proper way to make hard leather soft and workable.

Tuk-tuk the ivory worker told me, in broken English, that a man of his people must be very particular on the subject of teeth, in choosing a wife. If the wife's teeth were anywhere missing, or were otherwise inadequate to the serious daily business of chewing the edge of mukluk soles, then the family went most improperly shod.

"Muk-pi," I asked one day, watching their swift concentrated deftness, "why did you put all those long fluffy strips of wolverine on your winter parka—on the tip of the hood, the shoulders, and the long

ones all across the back? They are pretty, and so graceful. But not for use, are they? Just for ornament, for make pretty? There are none at all on your summer parka, I've noticed." It was a question I had long had on my mind.

But even Muk-pi's alert distaste against hurting the feelings of another scarcely kept her from an evident scorn at this display of ignorance. To her sisters she flashed a swift aside in sharp, tart, Inuit staccato. She seemed to be saying: "Just think of that! The size of this woman—and with a husband, too—and she doesn't know *that*! See how incredible is the ignorance of these white people!"—a scorn left mercifully untranslated, for what she answered me was spoken in her usual sweet courtesy.

"Lay-dee, Mississ Day-vees, devil and him wife live, all time, big hole—so ——" and she waved an arm to the enveloping north, where all winter long the flicker of the aurora had glimmered frostily and flung out its ghostly light. "Devil wife look, one time, him stew-pot. No meat. She say, 'Devil, go quick, catch meat. Catch *man* meat.' Devil, he go. Mush long time, trail. No sun. Winter trail. All time black. Man mush, all same time, make big hunt. Devil go, quick. Man go quick. Devil make —SO ——"

And she struck out a little arm so unexpectedly, and snatched so fiercely at that imaginary lonely human traveller, upon a dark and frozen winter trail, that I was truly startled.

"No hurt!" she laughed. "Him pretty good wife, that man—all time make plenty devil-catch, him parka. Head, shoulder, back, all-same you say. Devil, catch hold, one long piece, wolverine. Devil go home, quick. Devil say, 'Good meat—you see?'

Devil *wife* say, 'How come, meat? You bad devil, you plenty fool, devil! Go quick, catch *man* meat.'

"Devil go back—devil no can make, catch. Man make, you-call, get-away! Good parka, winter, all time plenty devil-catch, sew on. Summer come, plenty sun, all time. Devil stay, him hole. No make devil-catch, summer parka!" Which was reasonable, surely; quite as much so as the buttons we put so carefully on our men's coat-sleeves. Could I give as good a reason for our sewing of them there?

Our trip from Nome out into the still farther north was eventful—so much so that its telling must some day be another story. Upon our eventual return to Nome, in late September, there was still no word of Captain Fergus or of his coming, although Muk-pi was meeting, with patient, eager hope, every vessel that arrived from the States. But the last boat of the season from Seattle was almost due. We ourselves could not wait for it to take us to Saint Michael, as our Yukon trail to the interior would soon be freezing over for the winter. So we crossed angry Norton Sound in a motor-boat and began our tedious homeward river trip at once.

And what a fortunate thing for us that we did! For when the *Victoria* made her last journey into Nome that year she brought with her a black malignant stowaway hidden deep within her peaceful cargo. No Captain Fergus, swart and bold and unrepentant, returned to greet a waiting Muk-pi. Instead there stole silently ashore, unchallenged by port officers, unseen, the grim death which soon stalked master of that beach at Nome and entered, too, into every lonely cabin of the Sand-spit, taking toll of all it found there. It made accomplice of the winds that swirled new-fallen snow with sand about the now

deserted streets, snarled screaming through the fireless chimneys, and cut deep fear down into the heart of the now so isolated settlement.

When the white people of Nome had recovered from the first surprised terror of this onslaught and organized themselves into some form of community relief, a group sought out the Native Village to see what help they could render. They found tightly closed cabins, they found black death, they found a few panic-struck children huddled there, half frozen and half starved. But of all that happy summer life which I had seen and loved they found no sign. Not more than one grown man or woman out of ten had survived.

And I, safe home in the shelter of my snug log cabin, far up the Yukon, heard there this rumor and wild word of pestilence that walked unchecked upon that distant beach. I knew no mail could move for many weeks across those intervening snows; but my heart was cold with fear for Muk-pi's people and I sent message after message, begging some word of her. And after long weeks of suspense the news returned: "No adult member of that family remains." All—all—had set out on a last long bitter trail, across the Unknown Sea.

Often since that time I have blamed myself, thinking that I, who loved Muk-pi so, had been unconsciously the agent of her death. For out of a seeming friendliness I had sent her back again to her people, to die. But when I remember how alone she had been among us and how very eager to return, I believe that Muk-pi's little ghost will carry into that far world no evil thought of me. United at last with her own people, together they have set out on another of their friendly, joyous journeys, into new lands



of happy visitation—deep within those hyperborean tundras whence travellers, because content there, do not return. So, at least, I wish always to remember my little Muk-pi.



## THE WAYS OF MUK-PI

**M**UK-PI'S people live in a section remote from ordinary ways of travel, far away to west and north beyond those other portions of our good Alaskan land where most white people locate. Near my own town of Fairbanks the Natives are all Indians, while on the southeast coast are other and still different Indian people. But Outside friends will always ask me first about Alaska's Eskimos; and since through chance-found Muk-pi I came to know her kinsmen really well, I've told you first about that meeting with my Eskimo Butterfly—how I both found and lost her. During those days when we were close together, many a little incident occurred which painted vivid pictures of their ways—pictures that I have treasured with my memory of Muk-pi. Do come and sit with us in that rough cabin on Nome's Sand-spit and listen with me to that Eskimo chatter, sharing that good companionship.

It was the custom of Muk-pi's people to offer food when a person entered the home, even though that home might be merely an upturned summer canoe of walrus hide, tilted upon an Arctic sand-spit. But *such* food! Something in me absolutely revolted at its mere sight and odor for the choicest delicacy of that season, much admired in select Sand-spit circles, was a concoction of crushed blueberries half fermented, mixed with seal fat, and buried in frozen ground until it reached a slush-like consistency—the color and the odor equally odious! Muk-pi noticed my distaste at once and sprang to the rescue.

"Muk-pi no like pie, your people. Mississ Day-vees no like blueberry, my people. All same, no like!" She smiled in pleased delight over her gastronomic parallel.

"I say, my people—'You see lay-dee, very good girl, make good friend, long time, Muk-pi.' My people say—'Give him good eat, *akutak*.' Quick, Mississ Day-vees, you make eat, now, good reindeer leg. You see? Plenty smoke, good meat. You like him. I say, my people—'Good lay-dee make eat, already now.'"

This, then, was the remedy and it worked beautifully. She provided me with a long and really most edible strip of jerked reindeer meat that tasted like tough dried beef and was well smoked and salty. If Muk-pi could point out that I was already well provided with refreshment (and to lend color to the tale I gnawed occasionally upon the reindeer leg, with some real show of relish!) the local courtesies and amenities were observed.

All of us have funny notions about the things we can or cannot eat. What we are used to seems good, and I remember reading somewhere that people fought the potato as though it were a plague, when Drake and Hawkins brought it to England! I know that it was chiefly in matters of the palate (for which, it is said, there's no accounting!) the little Eskimo and I found mutual adjustment difficult, no matter how hard we both tried to please one another with friendly tidbits. Muk-pi looked so thoroughly the dainty Oriental, with her small hands and feet, her graceful manner and her quick response, I thought it quite safe to say "yes" when she offered me tea. But the decoction proved to be of most un-oriental flavor! It tasted more like concentrated lye

and must have been a-brewing for long hours upon that stove. My very tongue corroded at the first hot gulp and I set down the heavy cup with hurried clatter. But my little copper-brown friend caught up the cup and darted with it to another corner of the cabin, emerging with a black quart bottle conspicuously three-starred.

"Muk-pi forget! White people, all time, like this, him tea. Captain Fergus say, tea very good drink, plenty *this*, Mistaire Hen-nis-sie!"—And she smiled with a disarming innocence while lacing that half-pint-size cup with half its space in spirits!

"You like him, now," she cried, clapping delicate fulvid hands and standing by in beatific observance, to watch my looked-for joy in drinking of this dreadful potent cup! So, gathering what power of face control I'd learned in years of poker games with my husband's mining pals in many distant camps, I drank. Surely black vitriol could not result in more raw inner agony, but my hostess was very happy.

There was also that matter of the pie, which became a famous jest forever between us. I had made some superlatively perfect mince-meat pies—or so my husband called them, though I grant he had a motive: the lively expectation of future pies! After explaining carefully to Muk-pi what mince pies meant to "my people" of holiday spirit and good will, I had given her one to take home. Unfortunately, she had eaten that pie complete at a single sitting and it had made her desperately ill. She considered this a wonderful good joke on me and I grant that it was, though not perhaps from quite the same viewpoint. This little woman who could eat raw meat, frozen meat, petrified meat, and all manner of deadly and (to me) inhuman food, had

been utterly bowled over by my prize mince pie. "Eskimo pie"—indeed! Next time she came I had better learned my lesson and gave her, in place of pie, a box of candles. I had the grace never to inquire afterward if they were eaten or lighted. She may have done either. Anyway, they were deeply appreciated and had evidently furnished real cheer.

These people seemed to have very fine teeth, though the old women's teeth were sometimes worn down to mere stubs. This came, perhaps, through too much daily contact with walrus leather, chewing to pliability the tough soles of family mukluks. I learned that Muk-pi's mother, who had recently died, had practically been starved to death because she was unable any longer to chew but could only suck such nutriment as she might from chunks of very tough meat.

This had happened, so Muk-pi and her sisters carefully explained, even though they had given to their aging mother a brand new name, by which all the people had been most careful to call her. By all the sacred rites of magic, this should have foiled the grim and groping powers of darkness into giving the newly *named* woman a new lease of life! Now she was one of those, alas, who are "upon-the-ground-asleep"—*nuna-mi-sinik*.

For many days after her death no needle or bodkin could be used about the cabin, no axe or knife, for fear of accidentally harming the poor ghost which still was lingering near. There could be no harsh sudden noises, either—for they might frighten and offend. So too, little Muk-pi told me, after the killing of a polar bear the soul of The White One always waits three days near the spot where it has

been slain and any careless use of knives nearby or any angry shout or hasty movement, may possibly offend the ghost of this so much feared and revered Lord of the Arctic Ice—and cause some dire revenge.

In the old days when the whales were much more plentiful, the soul of the great white whale was respected in death and a period of utter quiet would be imposed upon all the people after one had been taken and killed, to do a proper honor to its vast and still hovering spirit. And a hunter who had killed a wolf must not sleep under his own roof for a full moon of nights, in tribute to the tireless spirit he had sped from living.

An odd thing caught my eye one morning, as I neared the Native Village. An Eskimo woman with a little stick in her hand was tapping on its back a tiny "husky" pup, not more than two days old. All was gravely done, methodically, with slow patience. She would hit just hard enough for the dog to feel and resent it, but not hard enough to hurt him. Muk-pi told me that her people did this from the time a pup is born, to strengthen its back. They often use their dogs for pack-animals as well as for pulling sledges, and they believe that this continued tapping will harden backs for later toil. As the animal grows older, the stick used is heavier and the blows become more violent, but they are never really hard enough to hurt.

Once I witnessed a baby's bath that might have seemed severe punishment to a child of a less hardy race. A small boy of about one year was up-ended on his mother's lap as she sat upon the ground, surrounded by motley kitchen utensils before her summer-cottage umiak. And she was literally scour-

ing the child's back with a mixture of beach sand and soap! His little body was a copper pink and his mother was rubbing the soft skin with the same hard rotary motion an energetic housewife might use on the base of a kettle. But the child was gurgling with pleasure, though he squirmed under the stiff friction.

Though more obedient, better mannered children cannot be found, I'll wager, within the breadth of Christendom, in all my days upon the Sand-spit I never saw a child really scolded or punished. I wondered if in their stern battle with existence, their children meant more as a symbol of continuing life to the Innuits than to our people of more easeful ways. Or maybe there was yet another reason, for I remembered something an old Mammy once said to a good friend of my own in Carolina, when that friend had upbraided her for not correcting a wilful only child: "Miss Jennie, I ain't nothin' else to give him, so I jes' has to give him his own way!"

—"Muk-pi," I asked, "don't your sisters ever punish their children, if they are naughty? Or aren't they ever naughty? They always seem so laughing, so happy."

"Come bay-bee, cabin, come very good spirit, all same time. You say bad word, bay-bee—you make hit, bay-bee—good spirit, him go way, quick. No come back, this same cabin, long time. Very bad what-you-call luck, bay-bee good spirit go way. Him mother, him father, all time very good, bay-bee. Speak nice, all time. Good spirit then make stay, him cabin."

"Tell me, Muk-pi, does the Good Spirit stay until the baby grows to be a man?"

"Your people, Mississ Day-vees, make all time

big fon-nee talk, good spirit. Muk-pi people, no make, fon-nee talk. Muk-pi people make all time friend, good spirit. He live, all time, my people cabin. He come, all time, with little bay-bee. My people love little bay-bee, all time. Good spirit, stay. Make bad talk, make cross hit, good spirit very much cry, go way, all time.

"Little bay-bee sick, medicine man come quick, put little bay-bee what-you-call soul, him medicine bag. Tie him soul, tight, no can die. Little bay-bee soul, no can go out, now, this same cabin. Tie him soul tight, medicine man, him bag."

All this deep magic was not, of course, generally discussed. Nor was it ever confided to white people except under unusual circumstances—or so my white friends in Nome told me. For I met many women of my own race in Nome, those days, who had never even set a foot upon the Sand-spit except to witness occasional Native dances, those dramatic spectacles of hunting and fishing symbolism so vividly enacted. The Natives (so they said) were dirty people and told lies. Also they would not talk when spoken to but only cluck, pretending that they did not understand. This I could readily believe for Muk-pi's folk feared ridicule above all things, children that they were, and argument with us grown-ups was so useless. They had learned through sad experience of our proselytish ways that to confide their simple ancient faiths often meant both ridicule and argument. But there can be no counter-word to silence.

What mimics they were, these people of my Muk-pi! And how very horrified some of the good white ladies of Nome would have been—those ladies who served me decorous tea of afternoons and with whom I played innumerable rubbers of bridge, o'



nights—if they could have seen us rolling with mirth o' mornings, out there upon the Sand-spit, while Muk-pi and her sisters mimicked to perfection their walk, their talk, their very tilt of head! Every little peculiarity was hit upon with the merciless wit of a caricature, and accented just enough to be excruciatingly funny.

"You play card, Mississ Q——? Mississ Q——, him one time buy fish, my brother, Chick-em. Make big talk—so ——" and there followed a long story of dramatic gibberish such as a child uses to mock the speech of grown-ups, with the accent and rhythm of Mrs. Q—— to the very life!

"Muk-pi, you are a little monkey!"

"Mon-kee? I no see, mon-kee. How come, him?"

To evade this too pertinent query I questioned in turn, begging Muk-pi to tell me of the five fine blue lines in her little chin—how they came there and what their meaning was. And she told me that when she was a young girl, just turning woman, her mother one day mixed a paste of deep blue dye in a little dish of hollowed stone. Next she threaded a needle of fine bone splinter and, pulling the thread through the paste until it too was a deep blue, she ran the needle carefully under the outer skin of Muk-pi's firm little chin, in five well-spaced close vertical lines. Then she cut off the threads that remained, leaving marks there like a blue tattoo. The process did not hurt very much or at all, so Muk-pi said.

Apparently this had taken place when she was about eleven years old, and probably it had to do with some rite of puberty; for to these primitive people, of course, the supreme mystery (as for us) is the occultism of the so-called "facts of life"—all

conspiring to make the woman the aboriginal source of magic and taboo. But because this is the prototype of *all* taboo, neither Muk-pi the little so-called savage nor I the so-called woman of civilization could reach down into and beyond those inherited mutual prejudices of ours to discuss it. This was far too abstruse a matter, way beyond our limited mutual vocabulary.

Though we talked of many a strange thing those days on the Sand-spit, while Muk-pi and her sisters made mukluks for me. Often she would refuse to answer a direct question—politely did not hear, or even more politely did not understand. But like any of our sex she dearly loved to gossip, and in woman gossip we exchanged between us many a rare coin of confidence. Always as we talked two of the sisters would be chewing mukluk edges, the long end thrown back and braced against a hunched shoulder. With the expertness of a man handling a large cigar, the heavy black strip of hide would be tossed from one mouth angle to another, for other teeth and other jaw-muscles to grip it. And the soles would be passed, too, from one woman to another for impartial mastication and lubrication. Frequent jests were made—founded, I had no doubt, upon the inordinate and most unladylike size of my feet! For there were many hearty laughs following sallies which Muk-pi, out of her consideration for me and my tender white feelings, left kindly untranslated.

I had my choice of color in the soles of my mukluks, but I was not allowed any choice at all in the pattern of the top portion. I had greatly admired the design of a pair worn by Chick-em, the fisher-hunter brother. His heirloom cod-hooks of beaten bronze (wrought from the wreck of some long-lost

Russian craft and delicately adorned with fascinating dangles of salmon scales, colored bone and stone) have no doubt proved the undoing of many a lordly fish. These mukluks of Chick-em's were made with a thin bright red strip of walrus stitched around the black turned-up sole while above that were wide vertical alternating stripes of brown and white reindeer leg, culminating at the knees in a deep collar of small checker-board squares made of intricately matched brown-gray and white reindeer.

But I could not have the bright red horizontal binding, Muk-pi said, because that was a "drug-store" color (aniline dye) which she considered was new-fangled, cheap and tawdry! No friend of hers would she allow to be seen in such a color. Chick-em's wife was a lazy person, infected with these false, new, modern notions, to have made him such mukluks—and his relatives were deeply chagrined to see him wearing them so shamelessly. Muk-pi mentioned this delicate family matter in quite the same nice tone of reserved and ladylike disgust that my own Philadelphia grandmother once used, when speaking of a "person" who left the house without first buttoning her gloves! Certain standards of conduct simply must be observed.

My mukluks were to have a deeper border of maroon, dyed from crushed native roots and "warranted not to crock, run or fade." Nor could I have the checker-board design atop, but another, "more nice," said Muk-pi. I soon found that mine were to be trimmed with diamond pattern—much more difficult to make, deftly matched and sinew sewn, and really much more lovely—so that in the end I was more than content. What right had I, even to comment? Watching the daily arduous chewing of

those soles, hour upon hour, until tough leather became workable and soft, I realized that any criticism of mine would surely be in the nature of looking gift horses in the mouth.

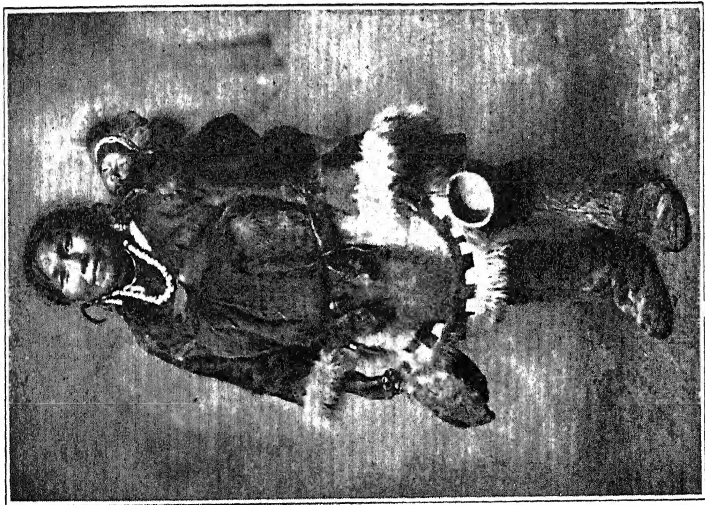
But the most adamant prohibition concerned the broad white stripes running up the leg of these boots. Such stripes were, for me, absolutely taboo. I argued and I pleaded. I offered to buy the necessary amount of white reindeer skin myself, for I knew that the white skin being rare is much more dear than is the natural brown color. But, no. They chattered and discussed and they were really very serious about it. Apparently a woman's wish to wear those white stripes on her legs was utterly heretical and revolutionary. Quite as disruptive of public morals, indeed, as the scandalous desire of "ladies," back in the '80's, to wear bloomers!

"Very bad, white piece, woman mukluk," Muk-pi declared, with the air of a Portia passing judgment.

"But, Muk-pi, your brother wears them."

"Very good, man mukluk. Very bad, woman mukluk," she declared, and nothing I could do or say or threaten or promise, would move her. Evidently there was some deep sex taboo regarding the matter, the secrets of which I was never able to fathom in spite of Muk-pi's liberal freedom of speech in other things. This had to do with standards of modesty, and standards of modesty simply aren't discussed in polite circles. Not upon the Sand-spit! It would *not do* for me to wear white stripes of reindeer running up my legs. I was a woman, and women did not wear them. That was enough, and it was final. My morals had to be safeguarded.

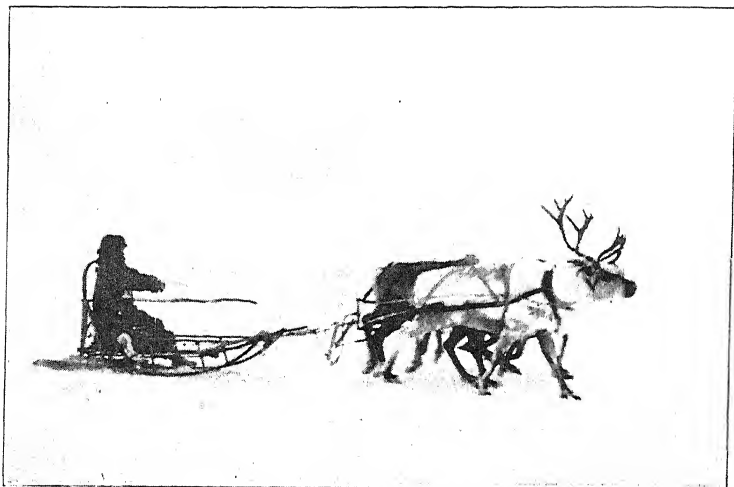
And such a quiet determination and sureness of



*Photograph by Lomen Brothers.*  
 "HIM MOTHER, ALL TIME VERY GOOD,  
 BAY-BEE."



ONE SMALL INNUIT. A LITTLE WARY OF "THE-  
 TALL-WHITE-WOMAN AND HER BLACK BOX."



*Photograph by Lomen Brothers, Nome.*  
**MUK-PI LIVES IN REINDEER LAND.**



*Photograph by Lomen Brothers, Nome.*  
**"WHITE STRIPE, VERY GOOD, MAN MUKLUK."**

purpose, I have never seen combined in so small a person!

The utter lack of trees or even bushes large enough to count for anything, has always seemed to me the most amazing thing upon the gaunt and Asia-facing shore-line of Seward Peninsula; and even more amazing was Muk-pi's dramatic story as she told me of her own first sight of growing trees. Here in Nome, where she was born and bred, there had been driftwood only—great dead trees from the Upper Yukon which its falling banks for twenty-two hundred miles are forever tearing down and carrying away, out into Bering Sea at length, where the summer current sets ever northward and sucks them finally into the narrow funnel of the Straits and so, on and up and beyond, into the greedy maw of the Arctic.

But all along that northwest coast through the Diomedes, driftwood from those far-away forests is mercifully upcast by the Sea, the whole brief, swift, sun-drenched summer long; and groups of men go daily, a primitive fire-worshipping coast guard, to collect this drift of Providence against the coming of an Arctic night. To men who dwell upon the treeless tundra, the barren coast, it is an ancient rite of immemorial midsummer.

Dead trees, water-logged trees, branchless and rootless trees to be converted into winter fuel, all these Muk-pi had known since infancy. But she had never seen a living growing tree until that time when as "cook and seamstress" she had travelled with Captain Fergus along the Arctic Slope and up the giant Mackenzie River into the heart of north-western Canada, where grow vast forests similar to those which reach from tundras to the Volga and

thousands of miles east into Asia—"The Northern Woods."

One day Fergus called her to come quickly from the little galley of their boat, where she was preparing a meal. He pointed to a far hill and bade her tell him what it was she saw there. She looked and was very much afraid. Beyond and grouped upon the opposite slope were many tall dark men—many strange tall dark men—standing upon that windy hill and watching them, waving their black arms in angry gesture. There were so many there, she knew that they had come to battle with them in this far strange country to the eastward—not the Innuited tundras but the place of alien Indian folk who dwelt always within these inner lands: people who named her people "Eskimo," raw meat eaters, in jealous fear; people whom her own kinsmen had destroyed so often, in times past, in many bloody battles. There were strange white men in that country, too,—men wearing bells upon their shoes. For that was Muk-pi's picture-telling of the spurred and booted Royal Northwest "Mounties."

Fergus had laughed at her fear. Despite her panic and her protest, he made fast the boat and went ashore there, the two of them advancing all alone to meet that hostile group of dark and threatening warriors on the hillside. As they drew nearer, these strange men waved their arms and whispered close together. She, Muk-pi, could hear them. They seemed ever to shift and move in council and always whispered some word secretly, together.

At last, though almost dead with terror, little Muk-pi the Innuited was herself walking in amongst those giants of the hill, these moving whispering



giants. He made her put out a hand and touch their rough sides, reach up and touch and even break away their hoary black arms of conifer. And then he told her that these wild and living things were trees—the very same whose poor dead watery ghosts she had so often gathered upon the familiar Nome Sand-spit, whose hot breath she had so often felt in winter fires and out of whose warm flanks were built the drift-wood cabins of her shore-dwelling people.

Trees—as men, walking.

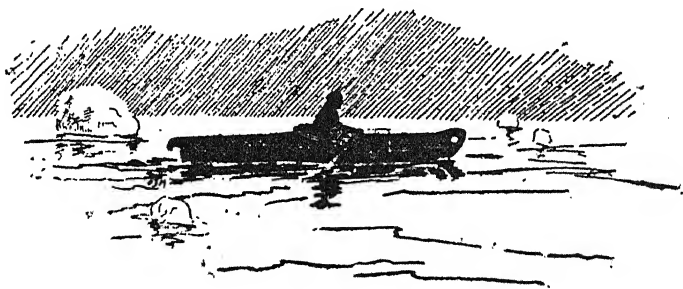
—Muk-pi's people are and ever will be strangers to the trees, for by long centuries of custom they have become the men of treeless tundras. They have chosen for their own the far north slopes of continents infringing on the Glacial Sea, where the ice wakes, the old ice speaks. Although my Muk-pi's own immediate family—herself, her brothers and her brothers' wives—were lost in “the great flu,” others of her people carry on. The Highest North is still most truly theirs, though we have brought new enemies for them to battle—germ enemies of strange disease, malevolent and fatal, to which her people have built up as yet no adequate immunity. Against such black malignant spells, both mission doctor and the village shaman find themselves impotent.

Yet out of that harsh world and their own sunny nature in it, Muk-pi's people have caught and hold felicity. Theirs is a superabundant measure of that rare gift of the gods—free, constant, bubbling laughter that neither fear nor night nor winter stillness when the Sea is closed, can still in them. I hear their laughter down the corridor of years, their kindly laughter. And when the deep cold settles on the Northland and the aurora's swaying curtain

sweeps across the sky with rising, falling, changing, swift, prismatic color, I think how Muk-pi told of happy souls who dance, dance, dance through an eternity of endless merrymaking. For Muk-pi's people know that, if a man die, he shall live again.

In very farthest North in June, among the buttercups and dandelions of brave stunted growth in the High Arctic summers—where no trees are, nor shrubs, but short-lived wild flowers by the million—there grows a tiny yellow poppy. As the swift summer passes and the sun turns south again, this poppy fades and a small golden butterfly appears. The Innuit say, "The flower has found its wings, and flown away."

This fable of her own loved people catches at the brevity and beauty of my own lost Eskimo Butterfly.



# THE PROSPECTOR

JANET OF JASON'S CREW  
A NIGHT AT BALD-FACE PETE'S  
NORA FINDS HER NORTH



## JANET OF JASON'S CREW

**J**ANET AITKEN was a contemporary Colonial Dame of our North Colony—if ever there was one! I wish that she herself, not I, could tell you of Alaska as she knew it, for every far-flung trail was her familiar. While she was not by any means the only woman prospector I've known, she was perhaps the one who most combined the typical and best prospector's qualities: faith that can literally move mountains and keen-eyed practical mistrust of all mere surface things, suspicion of appearance which is the very obverse of credulity! This is a soul-blend which can only make for restless feet and no continuous dwelling, for heights of aspiration and depths of brooding question that must always be the sole companions to Coronado's scattered children. Are they not forever putting questions to the inscrutable sphinx of Nature, all knowing but so mute—Nature, who has cached her treasure, somewhere, within the folded secrets of the hills? The thought can drive a man to madness or it can make a rare philosopher of him—and I'm not one of those new-fangled folk who think "philosophy" a synonym for failure, but am sworn member rather of a group who name it "Life's helmsman," the governor or pilot of the cruise.

Have you ever known a genuine prospector? If not, you've missed a real experience. Your true prospector is a compound of opposite qualities. Sometimes I think the dictionary definition of a pros-

pector should be: A gold seeker who knows it's there—but doesn't really want to find it! Another would perhaps read: A man who doesn't know from day to day whether he is four feet from a million dollars or a million feet from four dollars.

Janet Aitken was one of that diminishing but ever spell-bound crew who range free-footed, world-wide rovers over land and sea, to open up one bit of earth after another, as though this world were in a very truth their oyster which they with pick in hand will prize apart, to find the precious treasure tucked inside: usually failing, as men usually count failure; sometimes gloriously succeeding; but always following that golden gleam. Yet here's a strange inconsistency, a glamorous paradox: no group of people I have ever known care less for gold (as gold is generally considered, symbol of wealth and power) than do these virgin-gold seekers. Always, always, it is the quest that matters with your true prospector. In all his thousand-and-one-nights tales of golden search to which I've listened—yarns spun leisurely, for time cannot hurry in a land where work-day is moons long, not hours, and so too is the restful night—in all these tales by men who don't write stories but who live them, it's never of the gold itself they tell, it's never on the rare accomplishment of dream they lay a stress or emphasis.

You'll say, "But did you find it?" And he will answer, "Oh, yes!" "Oh, no!" with equal nonchalance—tell you of a million dollar claim swapped for a sack of beans, and then pass on to, "Did I ever tell you of the time when I and Shorty Carlson located the Ibex, down by Portland Canal? Well, I should tell you about that. You see, we was a-mushin' ——"

And so the saga grows—pure myth cross-fertilized amazingly with sober new-found earthy findings.

The proof of all this lies inside the well known fact that not one genuine prospector in a thousand has any use for gold, quite literally, when he has found it. A drunken sailor is a hoarding and exceedingly purse-careful body, in comparison! It's very rarely your true prospector will take his winnings and use it as a capital investment. Ninety-nine times out of one hundred he will "get shet of it" as quickly as he can, as though his gold-poke burned his pocket. You see, the found thing interferes with life's real business and best pleasure, which is the finding. It spoils the quest, and questing is what matters. If you don't realize all this, you'll never know or love my Janet and others of old Jason's Argonautic crew who are, through all the years, the seekers for the far-off and well guarded golden fleeces of this world.

The more desirable yet-uncompleted half of things—the beautiful, alluring, continuing, exciting and unended story, in which anything might yet be poised to happen—this was perhaps what wise old Hesiod meant when he was saying: "Fools! They know not how much more the *half* is than the whole!"

I have known many women prospectors, but I am telling you of Janet not because she was my friend but Nora's. Some day I want to spin the whole true story of Nora's coming to Alaska, for it is a most perfect symbol of much that happens in the North and much that seeking souls have found here—and have lost. It is, besides, perhaps the most strange human story of any I have known. Two people first must die, though, before my tongue is free; and only one of them has so far "packed his freight" beyond

that Great Divide. But there is no good reason why I should not tell you how Nora went with Janet Aitken on the Arvada stampede. This was quite enough adventure for any cheechako (which is our Northern term, you know, for tenderfoot). Thanks in part to luck, in part to Janet's keen old guessing at the hurt which lay within the other woman's heart, the gold search in my Nora's case proved her very soul's salvation.

If ever any one came to the North with glamorous romance in her, that woman was Nora Kithil. She lost her heart here and the man who found it, broke it. But Janet Aitken—who knew Kithil and his way with women's hearts of old, for she had met him first back in the early gold-born Klondike days—had sought out Nora and made friends with her, when friendship meant the one thing left to tie to, while from that friendship grew a fruitage that seemed very beautiful to those of us who were their neighbors. Janet's Scotch speech, more Scotch than Scotia's self when she was deeply moved or stirred by some old memory, instead of wearing off grew more pronounced as she grew older. And it had proved a subtle and old-country tie with Celtic and romantic Nora. Janet had often "mothered" me, as she had mothered every one she came in touch with—man or woman, or stray lost famished wolf-dog. But most of all she mothered Nora, for Nora needed mothering. Coming North to seek her freedom—a flame, a darting scarlet bird, all life and fire and sentiment and poesy—she had found here instead a bitter form of slavery. The tragedy was one that could have happened anywhere.—"Alas, the road to Anywhere is pitfalled with disaster."—But I misdoubt she could have found a way out anywhere



but here, for it was actually Alaska's self eventually that freed her.

Janet Aitken had prospected all the old-time camps in Colorado, California and Nevada before ever Nora was born. In rubber hip-boots, with guns belted to her waist, she had taken her chance with the men, never asking or receiving any favor or consideration or odds of them. Absolutely "straight," honest as day, generous and kindly to a fault, Janet was still traveling the trails, hitching up her dogs and hiking out at the word of any new discovery. A tall spare figure, eyes set deep under heavy dark brows, grizzled hair flying in stiff disarray, no woman ever found herself at disadvantage in the presence of Janet Aitken's clothes! Her frame was gaunt and manlike, a Stetson hat was pulled down on her forehead. She wore heavy high-laced boots, and a coarse skirt covered serviceable overalls in place of petticoats or silky lingerie. And yet no person who has ever known Janet would ever dream of calling her unwomanly.

Through all the camps from California to Dawson, hunting the pot of gold at rainbow's end, Janet had witnessed much of Kithil and his kind. Her keen eyes had seen quite enough and plenty of the wasters, the separators, the come-ons, high priests of the old order of bunc. And yet even they had not destroyed her faith in humankind, and humankind were all very dear to her great heart. There was many a prospector dying of scurvy in the wilderness, to whom this brave capable Scotchwoman had brought comfort and brightness and a touch of blessing. And wretched women, desperately ill and deserted by every one when disease had wasted their painted beauty, had often waked from a delirium of

fevered sleep to find old Janet Aitken in charge of their cabin, moving about with masterly efficiency there—a quiet, a generous and trusted helper to any one in time of need. Her natural way was on remote and soul-discouraged trails. It seemed as though she had a sixth sense, for she found with unerring zeal where there was any trouble or discouragement or want.

Janet had been absent on a hurried trip "Outside," but on the very first day of return she burst in upon Nora, alight with much more of excitement than small Nora would have thought the gaunt old-timer capable.

"You winsome wee thing, you!" cried Janet when she had first swept in. "You're looking pretty as a poppet! But it's lower than the midship feet of any centipede *I'm* feeling. Woe's me, to think of all I've missed, foolish old woman that I am. There has not been a true stampede these three year, yet the one moment when my back's turned and I'm off to California, for twa-three week away, then don't the lads pike out directly to Arvada and dig up good big pay there. And now I'm back only to hear the whole creek's stakit on me!

"I'm going over, though, so soon as ever I can get the dogs in shape, an' give yon diggings the once-over. There may be just a fraction I could cut in on, even now.

"For I'm wishful to be cashing in on some dreams I've been wet-nursing, these many year! True, I've wandered wide world over, wanchansie; but one day it's old Janet for an apple orchard of her own in Wenatchee, or a feat and tidy chicken ranch in the Yakima country. Yet maybe not—I'd miss the huskies!"

"But you wouldn't go prospecting now, in the middle of winter, would you?" Nora cried, in real alarm at thought of losing her again. "Alone, just with the dogs?"

"And why not set off, all a body's self?" queried Janet. "I am not grown so feeble with my years I keep my bed, do I? But who and ever gave the notion to you that drifted snow and hoary frost and glinty dust of gold don't mix? They are the North's own favorite com-bee-nashion, lass—ken *that*, noo!"

"There was a dear lad once was neighbor to me, back in the Dawson days—a lad from Scotia like myself, but a rare soft-spoken body. I would that you had known him, Nora girl. Mayhap you have heard tell on him. His name was Robbie Service and he—though just a lad then, mind you—had looked into the hearts of Northern men and in his little cabin in that old town underneath the hill, wrote wee heart-stirring verses of them. In one of these his ballats, friend Robbie told the whole tale of our restless hearts.

"For once you've panned the speckled sand and seen the bonny dust,

Its peerless brightness blinds you like a spell;  
It's little else you care about; you go because you must,  
And you feel that you could follow it to hell.

You'd follow it in hunger, and you'd follow it in cold;  
You'd follow it in solitude and pain;

And when you're stiff and battened down, let some one  
whisper 'Gold,'

You're lief to rise and follow it again!

"That's me, Nora! Me and my kind, as Robbie Service set us down on paper there. He gave me once a wee book of his own, wi' Dawson verses into

it. If you'd like, I'll lend it, when you come intil my cabin next.

"But lass, I've a rare fancy. I'll wager this new Stetson hat I got me down in 'Frisco, that you've not poked your pretty nose out from the town since first you struck here in the front of summer. Now have you?—Do you come along with me, we'll take maybe a ten days off, hitch up the huskies, pull out for Arvada, and make a jundy passiar to see what they've left for us there. We'll maybe stake a claim or two and take our chances with the rest o' the brisk lads.

"Old Janet always wanted to have a look-in on that country o'er the rig, and if we dinna uncover something over there, 'twill be something strange! There's been a sight of pool-room prospecting done in that neck of the woods, but no real digging in.

"What do you say to that, now?"

"It sounds like dream come true," sighed Nora, "but really I cannot leave. You know that Kaspar wouldn't——"

"Dinna worry your small pate over Kaspar, my lass. I clapt my eye on that great tree of a gray man this day, and thought him growing orra plump and near to handsome, with all the hailsome grub you have been feeding him! But take now the true rede of an old-timer, Nora dear, that far and 'way the best of management for ilka man is to leave 'em guess a bit! Do not tarry over-long sot, or he will quickly lose affectuous interest. What they love most is getting things.

"They're like old Janet, now, wi' the new strike; for 'tis not gold I'm hunting so much as finding the gold.—Do you get me, Nora?"

"I 'get you,' Janet, and think your idea splendid. But still I don't see ——"

"Ye dinna see how this fine Kaspar is to get on for the matter o' ten days, perhaps, without a pernickety wifie to bundle of him up in cotton wool and spoon-feed him?" laughed the big woman, refusing to admit the actual bitter situation—as she always did, out of respect for Nora's pride. "Well I know you. You've set out to slay and slaughter this strapping fellow, with kindness all utterly, stretching and crowding of him with good eats late and air', like to a Strassburg goose—or whatever thing it is they stuff so!

"If you would like to go (and I well see you would) hum and hanker no longer for I'll arrange all that with Kithil, never fear. He'll come to time and never get the wind up, when *I* talk to him," she threatened, with a fierceness not altogether feigned.

"That's wonderful of you, Janet, for the trip will be a rare treat to me! Will Arvada prove to be a rich camp, do you imagine? People tell me that these strike stories are like a stone thrown into water—the farther from the fact, the bigger grows the tale of it."

"Who knows?" the other answered. "I've necked and gee-poled into far too many long forgotten camps to look for over much, of any. Arvada camp was locate much too late last season, to do any but discovery work before the freeze-up. They stoppit with the snow, but they were only getting down to where the pay was. They'd pans were better than any had before, on that side of the hill; and, come spring, it is then a simple matter of setting up the boxes and taking of her out.

"They do tell me that the whole of Chenowa creek was staked; but losh, you can credit nought of grapevine gossip. And there might just be some-

thing left. We old-timers can no afford to overlook a bet, my lassock!

" 'Tis told, there was one while an old Alaska sourdough went to Heaven by mistake, when he checked out here. When he came maundering by the pearly gates and 'lowed he wanted in, Saint Peter met him with dour look and massif sort o' tally book in his twa fist, and snubs him up right short.

" 'Look-ye here, old-timer! Who be you, and wherefrom do you hail?'

" 'Me?' upspake the old prospector. 'Why, I'm a sourdough from the Yukon country.'

" 'Hoots, toots! This is no place for such land-louper,' 'lowed Saint Peter. 'Why, by some book-keeping oversight, eight or ten of you chaps got yourselves let in here, not lang syne, astray among the leal; and we have had the Marshal and six Dep-pities out special, a watchin' of this batch e'er since. First thing they do is to sneak off with pick and shovel and a pan and dig up our fine golden streets on us, and start working the dirt. What do ye know of that? 'Tis unlesome. We mauna have such doings—right here in Heaven, too, among all this good company.'

" Ah-weel, this same old-timer scratchit his pow a bit and then he spoke right up to Saint Peter, orra bold.

" 'See here, Pete, I got a proposition to put up. You allow that us old Klondikers have been a-causin' you some trouble here. I'll guarantee all fair and square to get you shet and rid of the whole squad for keeps, by come to-morrow's noon, if you just leave me have a look-in onto these rich diggings I've always heard such tall talk of.'

" Well, now, that proposition looked right good

to Peter, so he agreed and he puts down this here old-timer's name in his big book and opens up the great front door wi' his own brassy key. And this prospector goes careerin' around Heaven and pretty soon forgathered with a whole parcel of pals and cronies of his'n, well acquaint from Dawson back in '98 when they were unco pack and thick together.

" 'Why, hello there, Scar-face! And Flat-wheel, you dad-blasted old cripple, how in hell did *you* ever hirple up to here? I ain't seen Eat-'em-up-Frank there since we-all panned that bar on Forty-mile, back in nineteen-o-two! An' if there ain't the Cross-eyed Swede! It's like collectin' a dead account to meet up with you here! Where in time did you pick up that embong pong? Must have been livin' high these days, off something tonier than sow-bosom!—Say, boys, how are the diggings? '

" 'Gi-gantic!' they allowed, unanimous. 'Cast round and rustle you a pan, now, and get in on this big pay. Cut the lingo and jump to it, feller, and quit your no-count cultisin' around. There ain't been nothin' seen like *this* Camp, since old Bonanza Creek was struck.'

" 'O! you boys ain't got such rousin' good pay here, so's I can see,' says this lad, acting sleekit and blawin' awful strong. 'Looks to me like this here camp's overrated. You've to howk up all that solid pavement, too, to get at the pay.'

" 'Why say, you ought to've seen the boys scoopin' her up down there in Hell, where I come by old Hornie's this-a-morn. Why say, *there's* sure where the rich pay is right now. Coarse stuff, too, slugs of gold big's your fist. All loose dirt and don't need to be thawed none. Just hoise her out. Some strike the boys have made down *there*, I'm tellin'.'

"Well, sir, at crack of dawn fine and early, Saint Peter chancit to be looking out from his window and he sees 'leven or nine old prospectors, each with his own outfit, duffle and all packed tidy on the huskies—pick and shovel and a side of bacon or so (though Levi Stein do claim there will be nought o' that good grub, hereafter. Yet how, I ask ye, would Heaven prove up Heaven to a Sourdough, wi'out his whiff of bacon sizzling in the morn?)—with bacon, like I say, and a sack of flour, hikin' out all quiet-like, trossed and headed straight for this big new strike down below at Auld Clooty's, this here newcomer had reported. The old Saint snirtles in his grizzly beard and lets 'em sneak away easy, mighty glad to be shet of them.

"But along at the fag end pikes this Johnny-come-lately, all by himself, with a fine good prospectin' outfit he'd rustled him somewheres—though usual his only baggage was a change o' woollen socks.

"'Hi, there, old-timer! Where you-all beatin' it to so fast?' yells Peter. 'Thought you was just to trick these billies, to rid ourselves of them. You ar'na pulling out yourself, from the camp?'

"'Bet your life,' said the old-timer. 'Ain't you heard? There's reports of a big new stampede, down yonder to Nicky-Ben's.'

"'But look-ye here, don't you remember? That was the yarn you was to string 'em with!' exclaims Saint Peter.

"'Diel-ma-care!' allowed this lad. 'Ye see, Pete, you can't never tell. That is my doctern. You know how us prospectors is—we got to be showed. There might just be something to this strike. It sounds good, and it's another chance!''"

Nora laughed more heartily than she had done in



months. Janet had spoken truly the characteristic parable of age-old sophistry that lies in the prospector's mind, and which so often will invent delusion to save itself and then fall victim to its own cunning. She laughed until the tears came, and it did her good.

"O, you blessed optimistic Janet!" she cried. "What stuff are you old-timers made of? We cheechakos aren't worthy to lace up your shoe-pacs."

"Ssh, child! All the prospectin' crew must be ingrainit opteemists; but we're a tough lot, too. I wouldn't care to raise even a huskie pup as wouldn't take a chance! If it hasn't the guts to gamble, it isna worth the raising and is due for the sack with the rock in it and the deep pool. For with us it's ever 'one more trip for the golden treasure that will last you all your life,' the way my neighbor laddie wrote in crambo-jingle.

"And I like not this living on in towns, Nora. Fairbanks herself is unco ceevilized and ceety-like, for me. When I come home and would be nicely settled here, then there is something soon begins to call me and I'm unsettled, and must leave again.

"Sometimes 'tis the streamers—the lights that crackle there and blaze above the winter trail, when you're out with none but the huskies in the midst of all this great white world, alone—one o' the nameless and unrestful ones, who travel nameless rivers. Sometimes 'tis silence over all that calls to me. And sometimes 'tis some far-off glimpsit I have looked on and must see once again, lass, afore I die—for something in me tightens at the thought of it.

"I know that it will get me some day, this North Country; but I have lived o'er long, and I have grappled with the North and love her, rarely.

Likely enough 'twill be my weird, trail's end, in some far Norland valley to meet some strange death there, my lone."

Janet's deep-sunken eyes were bright with an unusual fervor, and she laid one strong hand upon the other's arm in emphasis.

"No matter where that land is, Nora—if there be some way or some fragrance of it that catches in your heart, so eyes will fill when thinking on it—that land is yours, your native earth, bound to you, you to it. The North is such a land, to me.

"And I care most for her in winter, for she's worthier then and shows herself alone to them that truly love her. Shows best her stark white gleam of beauty and her threat of bitter cruel, alike. She is unmeaning to me, when she fixes up herself with gairs and pretty blossoms and fol-de-rols and what-na, in the summer. The gaukie and glib-gabbit howtowdie tourists can have her then, for all of me. She is but fooling them, and they don't know it. There's alway a stiff challenge to her call and it is that would make her friendsome, e'en with the cruel. She's to be wrestled with and beaten—if ye can. But, howsomever, in the end she's bound to work her will upon ye.

"If ever they should build a railroad into here, like some lads say, I'm going to move on, Nora, that I will. I'm going to pull up my stakes and move—up to the Chandalar or to Siberia, or to some northart place other—where there's no too much folk, nor living air is moithered with the screech of iron. The reek of chimney smoke is baleful to my een, the fret of talk breaks through my sleep and, when I wake, I'm eerie.

"Alaska's not herself when you must share her

with so many more. She's not herself when you can see her only here in town—as you'll soon learn—a wild thing, but half broke to harness and uneasy, like a wolf pup that's hitchit with a team of malemutes."

"Speaking of malemutes," said Nora, "when am I to learn to mush the dogs? If I'm going partners with you, Janet, it's not to be as 'excess baggage,' as you say here in the States! If I can't be a useful partner, I'll not go."

"You'll be useful, right enough. I'll see to that, never fear," laughed Janet. "And you'll learn, by doing as I do and when I do it. But dinna miscall my dogs 'malemutes.' They're huskies, and there's a mort of difference. Do you come to-morrow's morn and learn to tend the dogs with me. That will acquaint you with them. They've not been hitchit to the sled for months and we are like to have our hands full till they're tawie once again. Get you some thick-hoofed shoes for those twa tiny feet, my girl. You can wear my reindeer parka. 'Twill be warm enough and I'll not need it. Then we will take a passiar or two out on the Fox Trail, and so soon as the pups are hardened just a wee mite to collar once again, we will start forth thegither and seek our everlasting fortunes."

"I've always thought that fortunes came on ships," laughed Nora, "but if mine should come by way of dog-sled, I would not quarrel with it!"

## A NIGHT AT BALD-FACE PETE'S

**J**ANET went over the harness very carefully to see that it was all in perfect condition. Each dog had his round stuffed leather collar, like an old English horse-collar, to which were hitched his traces of webbing. Crossed webbing over the back, supporting the tugs, completed the simple outfit. The traces of each dog were fastened to little trees or spreaders, which in turn were attached by short pieces of rope like forked branches on either side of the main tug-line. This in turn ran under the body of the sled and was securely fastened there.

Eight huskies formed Janet's string, making four teams of two dogs each to be harnessed and hitched to the tug-line. The ninth dog was a Siberian, Janet's super-intelligent leader. Hitched by himself out in front of all the others, he was the brain and they the brawn although Oolik was not of a breed ever to let his traces hang loosely. Alert, with head held high, it was he who interpreted by quick response the four simple spoken words by which a powerful dog team is controlled.

Nora soon learned the first principles of handling the team, which were very simple in theory, but required, as she soon discovered, an amazing amount of patience and practice in application. "Gee," "Haw," "Whoa," and "Mush" are the whole necessary vocabulary of the dog-musher, though it must be confessed that a handy supply of invective is sometimes serviceable!

"Why do you always say 'mush' when you want

them to go?" she queried. "That's a rare queer word—mush."

"It's the one only word any dog of the North savvys for 'get on,'" answered Janet. "I dinna know rightly, but a learned body informit me 'twad be some French word that ancient trappers into Canada once used—'marshon,' or sic-like. But the Southron following after them miscalled the word 'mush on,' and now 'tis just plain 'mush.' Yet it does the business, fancy French or no!"

"When you walk, you 'mush.' When you drive a dog-team, you 'mush dogs.' And you are called a 'musher,' too. It's a sorely overworked word, it seems to me," mused Nora, busy at her sewing.—"How much will these dogs haul?"

"Fifty pounds apiece if you would go in haste, or a hundred if it's slow and steady. Howbeit, it's all according to the nature o' the trail, if she be heavy new wet snow or packit down and slick. Or the degree of cold. Sixty below or more, and snow will grit like gravelly sand and screech like a soul-dammit warlock 'neath your running gear. And there is much unlikeness in the nature of the dogs. The malemute are native, and they've the character of Native. They are cheerful beasties and happy-go-lucky; but there's a touch of quit-streak to them, sometimes, you must watch carefu'.

"A husky was the Hudson's Bay breed, original, half wolf and half whelpit by anything came handy that was stalwart and stout and looked good at the time, I'm thinking. Some will say collie, some say mastin or Newfoundland or great Bernard. I've seen plenty whose forebear must be coursin' greyhound, and some who have that towsie and wise-Irish look like Mary Lee's Airedale has got to him.

They're doggit enough, and spiritit and spunkie; but beware the twa-part drop of wolf blood in a husky! It gives to him a streak that is wickit and wilful, and will ne'er make him leal and friendsome to a human body.

"And he hunts alway in the pack. If another doggie scaith him, he'll act whippit, mayhap, but will not accept the lickin' sportsmanly like some true thoroughbred might. He will run away, whingein and hirplin; but one day soon after when the rest of the team are hitchit with him and they all come on a full run down the street thegither, that husky wi' a techy whine will snarl out to his cronies:

"'Look ye there, fellows! I have snowkit, yon, the low cur what I told you of that took me to a trimmin', fortnight since. Let's after him and do him up, the whole of us!'

"And the team, mayhap a dozen dogs or more—unmindful then of you, the sled, the harness, or the whip and all—will pile upon that poor unfortunate unwarnit whelp, a snarling mass of dog flesh. When you've pulled off the yellochin yarring pack, cut harness and untangled all this fine dog-pile collie-shangie, naught you will deescover of the poor nedmist tyke but a blob of blood upon the snow and wad or so of tawted buskie hair. The wolf dogs go off blithesome then, a-lickin' their red chops."

"Uugh," shuddered Nora, "it frightens me."

"No need," retorted Janet shortly. "Teach 'em their place and they'll respect you, if they ken well it is a knap and lick and skelp they'll get a settling with, if they are laith to mind ye. A husky's a work-animal, and not a pleasure-beast to pal with. It's no fault of their own. It's the aloof way of the wolf in them, man's self has placit there.

"There's Oolik, now, he is another mettle altogether. He has got brains, and he is nigh to human. He's got the proper dog notion of being one of the outfit, guarding the camp and chuck and such, which the others lack mostly. The wolf in them makes them outlanders, outlers, not ones to put in common with us men-folk; and you'll ne'er hear them bark like honest dogs but only whinge and growl, eery and mournful, like a wolf's howl.

"An honest bark betokens dogs that have lived long with folk. It's their trying to talk and sass back to you, I guess. Sort of human."

At last a morning well on the right side of noon found Nora and Janet ready to hit the trail for the new Arvada camp. Nora never knew what method of persuasion Janet had used with Kithil. Certainly he was agreeable enough to the trip and actually helped with the final lashing of the outfit on the sled.

The impatient dogs, yelping and crying to be off, were tugging at the tow-line as though to break the sled in two. No brake, no combination of men could have held the sled in place while Janet and Kithil stowed the final roll of blankets and grub, if its nose had not been firmly braced against a telephone pole. The eager dogs pulled and pulled, yelping delightedly at the thought of a journey; but all their tugging did not move the heavy post, deep-set and frozen into solid ground.

Nora was tucked into the rear of the sled where she could lean against the high and slanting back. It was cozy as might be, with Janet's great wolf-hide rugs wrapped round and round her. The luggage had been stowed about her feet and forward on the long sled, way out to its nose—then wrapped in tarpaulins and now securely lashed.

"There, little one, you're well rowet; and if we should o'er-tip sklenting the first kink of the road, you'll no be spilling out, that's certain!" laughed Janet. "All set there, Kithil? Well, off-hand then, and so-long to you."

Janet was clad to the knees in a denim fur-trimmed parka, with heavy trousers tucked into her fur-lined mukluks. She wore huge mittens made of beaver fastened on a harness such as children wear, around her neck. For mittens must not be lost, whatever happens! The team will not stay hitched and still while one goes back to pick up a lost mitten, and to be long without one in that keen air, with a slow sun not yet showing over far south hills, would surely mean a frozen hand.

With a violent sudden twist, Janet swung the nose of the long sled clear of the snubbing-post.

"Mush, you huskies—Whip-aff! Whip-awa'!" she cried. The dogs with yelps of joy bounded forward, swinging the heavy sled free of the post, and they were off. Janet ran for a moment to be certain that all was clear and steady, then swung to the runners.

"Whoop-ee! Hi-yi! You, Oolik—Gee into that trail! MUSH!"

Swinging her long black-snake with steel muscled arm, it snapped and crackled over leaping backs of huskies. They sped through town, a bounding yipping flurry of dashing dogs and loaded sled, here and gone in flashes—across one street and down another, taking the sharp curves on one runner, Janet swinging far out on the side to counter-heft the load. All her weight on the deep-driven pronged brake-fork could not appreciably slow down that team of eager huskies and the wildly joyous Oolik.



"Look-see!" exclaimed a man at the window of a corner store. "There's Janet Aitken off to Arvada, I'll bet anything. Came home last week and found a new creek staked and couldn't stand not to be in on it!"

"She's old enough to be my mother. But will you see her handling that team now?" cried another. "She's some dog-whaler!"

"Who's that she's got in with her?" asked the first. "They kicked up such a snow there on that turn, I couldn't rightly see."

"Looked like Kithil's wife. The two are pretty thick."

"You'd think Janet had better sense than take a cheechako with her, this weather. Likely to be thirty-five or forty by night, and they may have to siwash it on the summit."

"Don't let that worry you none, young feller. I mind when I and she and a bunch of others siwashed it on Gold Dome for three nights runnin' once, waiting for a crust. Old Janet'll get through, all right. If I had half the pep that woman's got, I'd be hell-roaring on Easy Street this day. That thistle-jumper's one of the best mushers in the North, I'm here to tell you. She was pushing a pup's muzzle through a work-collar before you was dry behind the ears!"

—When they had reached the limits of the town and scattered cabins gave way to the unbroken forest of spruce threaded with the silver tracery of birch, the team began to settle into their collars and prepare for the long trail. To sweep along so swiftly and so close to the white ground flying past, gave Nora a sense of wonderful elation. She looked out over dancing backs of dogs and upcurled bushy brushes,

upon a world that dashed by with what seemed incredible speed. In truth, they had steadied down to something like four miles an hour; but the gliding nearness of the snow and the quick bobbing movements of the dogs made their passing seem much more swift.

The sky was filled with glow of rose, thrown into its translucent bowl by a sun that lingered still below the south rim. Amethyst shadows filled the cool depths of woods and fell softly upon the hollows of the snow. The whole world was still as though great Nature's self forbore to breathe. Frost from the panting dogs fell back upon thick ruffs and their dark bodies, tipping their long fur with a thousand scintillant points until they seemed to Nora like a racing pack of rare and priceless silver foxes, transporting her by magic through this wood.

The notion charmed her and she let her mind drift easily away into that realm of make-believe she once so dearly loved. All the hard light of common hours and common days, which had so held her, melted once more into the restful haze of dreams. The miles flew by, a faery wayfaring. Only the soft pad of the huskies on the beaten snow, the crisp swish of the runners as they bit into the hard-packed trail, disturbed the utter stillness, the vast silence, the overwhelming satisfying solitude.

The sun had cut the southern rim and showed himself for only a brief moment, then slowly dropped back of the violet hills to bless again his winter-favored lands with light. The glow of rose and amber still hung about the sky but deeper shadows filled the hollows of the woods, a deeper silence fell upon the lonely trail. The wearied dogs trotted more slowly, their plumed and frosted tails no longer up-

curved proudly upon their rhythmic backs, but drooping heavily against the dragging traces.

"Nora lass," spoke Janet, "are you waking?"

"O my dear, yes! How selfish I have been! We were to take a turn about with mushing, and here I have been sitting in a happy dream, forgetting—forgetting everything!"

"It's the spell o' the gousty winter trail, that lifts the heart aboon. 'Twill wash you clean of all that bitter is or drear," spoke Janet gently. "Well do I know it. 'Tis a grand pree-scription to hold one unthought long; and 'tis that pulls us away from towns—to make our souls rich, not our poor pindlin pouches.

"Come to-morrow, when the huskies are not so all-fired flisky and the long trail winds sideling down through open land, so that we'll no be risking smashes on a snag should our sled stray among the trees—or landing heels-o'er-gowdy should aught go wrong—then shall you take a hand at mushing, if you'd crave it, old Janet riding.—Though 'tis more than likely I will fidge and drive myself distractit, for I've no lady liking to sit peaceful.

"But have ye been so lost in fairyland, ye cannot eat? 'Tis time we had a snack, lass, and the pups need breathin' spell. Roll out, and set your teeth into a cup of tea and bannock sandwich. I'll make us a wee bit of blaze and do you watch the tea-water till steam creeps out beneath the lid, then snatch it swift. I'm fussy o'er my teacup, even on the trail!"

It was only mid-afternoon but a great moon was already high in heaven, when Nora and Janet reached Bald-Face Pete's log road-house where they had planned to spend the night. Several men were there whom Janet knew of old. She greeted them

all heartily by name—Tonsina Bill, Picta the half-breed, Happy Jack, and Wise Mike Pekovitch.

"Mike, I've not crossit your trail in years, though you don't look somehow natural without a brace o' Kuskoquim trailers! D'ye mind that time we were strayed on the Delta in the big blow, and took to high-gradin' the pups' rations, a-sharin' the least moldy bits of dog-fish with ourselves? A bad winter, that."

"Sure do," grinned "Wise Mike."—"Let me and Happy, here, put up the dogs for you, Mis' Aitken. You and the little woman go right in and get yourselves next to Pete's stove."

"Gi'e o'er, lad. I mushit dogs afore you boys was born, and you know well enough that I'll go nigh no blaze till all the beasties are bed down and fed. Lend me a hand here with this sled, if you'd be helping. Dog-salmon and rice bucket is for'ard.—Run inside, Nora, flip off your parka and be a-warming by the chimla-lug."

When the dogs were fast in the kennels, bedded and fed, then only did Janet herself join the group around Bald-Face Pete's crackling fire. Their coats and mittens, soaked with melting frost as soon as they had entered the hot room, were hung to dry upon the "Christmas tree"—a large rack suspended from the ceiling above the stove. Here were steaming a miscellaneous collection of moist woolen socks, mufflers and mukluks. Their sweaty odor, mingled with that of native-tanned hides and the reek of many an ancient pipe, took away for a moment Nora's appetite for the meal cooking there in full view.

But when Pete set on the table a platter of fried pickled-salmon bellies, with a steaming dish of home-grown "spuds"—and drew from the oven a pan of

hot biscuit and a great bowl of baked macaroni rich with melted cheese—something must have told her that all was somehow well; for she drew up to the long pine table with the rest, sitting upon a case that once had held assorted jams. Inspired by Pete's most hearty "Come and get it or I'll throw it out," she soon tucked away her share of a really splendid meal.

The edge of appetite was sharpened by all those hours of cold, her memory had been washed of all unpleasantness by the quiet healing of the silent trail, and Nora was again the happy eager girl who had once come adventuring into The Far Country. The one room log-walled cabin was lighted by a single lamp upon the table, which filled the corners with mysterious shadows and threw in vigorous Rembrandt relief the strong and frost-cut faces of the men about her.

They were in the midst of a glad chaff-game with Janet, touching on old days in Dyea, on Anvil Creek and Bonanza. Telluride and Cripple Creek, Goldfield and Virginia City were common memories to them but were mere empty names to Nora. At last, sensing her interest, they began to talk "at" her—and like any gathering of Sourdoughs speaking to edify a cheechako, they chose as usual to discuss the winter cold.

Happy winked his off eye at Janet and tossed the first ball rolling.

"How does the spirit read, Mike? Is she dropping?"

"Hell, yes. We're due for a deep cold, I reckon," answered Wise Mike, with a careless flicker in the direction of the stranger. "She's loosed all holts and droppin' clean out from under."

"Hell ain't no place to mention before ladies, Michael. Besides, hell don't mean the same here like it does some places. I've seen a-plenty times out on the trail, seventy below and still a-goin' down, when my idea of heaven was prezactly what the old-time Methody preachers used to call eternal hot-place.

"I met me a sky-pilot once who had been up there to Point Barrow for some years—nice young fellow he was, too. But he was tellin' me he couldn't get those Eskimuckers to be-have, a-tall, tellin' them Hell was hot. They all allowed they wanted sure to go there and sit and toast themselves upon the grid a spell, and warm up!

"So he just coppered all the bets and let on that if they was real good children, they'd get a chance maybe to swing on the gates of the hot-place all their future lives; but if they was real wicked-like, they'd freeze stiff for the rest of time. And, by Christmas, that made 'em wiggle their ears! He had them Natives jumpin' through hoops, they was that eager to get his O. K. on a ticket to the good old hot-place!"

"Course it gets pretty cold some days, even now," contributed Bald-Face, passing back and forth from table to stove. The scrapings of the plates he threw to an old malemute, who jumped for them expertly. The dishes he dumped clattering into the large pan of water that had been heating on the stove, and now he began to scrub them violently.

"I'll dry," said Nora, jumping up. "I've been sitting still all day in the sled and it seems good to be upon my feet a while."

"Why, thank you, Miss, thank you.—Well, as I was sayin', it gets some cold even now, but not ever

like the old days. Does it, Mike? Remember how we used to cord the rabbits?"

"Sure thing," agreed Mike. "You see, Miss, it was this way," he explained. "In the early days, rabbits was so thick in this country that they fair over-run the place. Dang good eatin', too, if you should ask me—either for dogs or folks.

"Well now, come fall we old-timers used to go out and cut down big piles of brush and stack it up high, all dry and nice. After the snow come and it got pretty nippy—along about Christmas, like now—we'd pike out some night and touch off these-here piles. Gad, they made great bonfires! And the bloomin' bunnies would come runnin' in for miles and miles around, to see this-here fire; and they would set around in the snow and warm their toes, a-watchin' of it burn, just fascinated-like."

"And when the fire burned out—sudden, like a brush fire will—hot as hades one minute and cold as Christmas the next," contributed Pete, sousing the big platter into the hot suds and handing it to Nora, "why then, Miss, them rabbits would begin to think about goin' home and start to pull up stakes. But they couldn't budge. No, sir! Not by a flea's whisker. The fire had melted them into their tracks and it had come on cold again so sudden, they was froze there solid when the fire went out."

"Not honestly?" said Nora, looking from one to the other and trying in the dim light to see, by their faces, if they were joking. "Not honestly?"

"Honest to goodness," Pete swore, "cross my heart if it ain't so, Miss. And in the morning all we done was go out and rap them poor bunnies over the head and throw 'em in piles, like cord-wood. They'd freeze stiff, and we come out with sleds and teams

later on and hauled 'em in. They was sure fine eatin', too."

"Bet your life," Happy corroborated. "Rabbits is scarce these days. And it ain't no-wise so cold on the trail now as it used to be, neither. Remember that time we was goin' over to Circle, Mike, and had the trouble with the candle?"

"Sure thing," responded Mike. "It was this way, Miss. Happy and me had been over to Fairbanks and got our mail and grub—besides cuttin' loose, some. It was mid-winter, like now, and as we started home we knowed it was plum cold, but jest how deep she was we didn't know.

"Well, first night out we had to siwash—sleep out, you know, no tent or nothin' overhead—and when we'd fed the dogs and they'd holed down into the snow, we had a bite of bacon to drape ourselves around and somethin' wet and warm from out a bottle that we'd brought. Then we wropped us up in our rolls. Happy here was sort of restless—had a hot letter from some girl that was a burnin' holes in his pants pocket, seemed like. So when he thinks I'm a-ripping her off pretty steady, he reaches inside the roll and gets a candle, lights up, and sticks it in the snow—to memorize to his-self all these here fond endearments what she had wrote. There's a hell of a hang-fire to Jack, here, Miss; but when he got it final, all nice and tidy in the place he just will keep on callin' his 'brain,'" continued Mike (avoiding a dextrous side-swipe aimed at him by the grinning Happy!) "he starts to blow out that candle. Well, sir—she wouldn't blow. So he reaches out and sticks it plum under his nose and blows again. Not a flicker. Then he gives *me* a poke.

"Hi, there! Jar loose! Wangle your ears akimbo,



feller. Come alive, and look at this-here candle, will you? What in Christmas did you get that bottle filled with, down to Fairbanks? It must be mighty high-proof stuff, all right, the genooine bazinka. I can't blow out this dod-gasted candle!'

"Well, I and Jack both blowed on it, like I'm tellin' you, but she never once budged. Then I took right holt of her and—would you believe me, Miss?—it was so cold, that flame had frozen plum solid onto that candle."

"And that wa'n't the worst of it," added Happy. "Thinkin' this so dang curious, we rolled the thing up in our bed and took it in to Circle City with us next mornin'. The storekeeper over there and all the Natives thought it a great freak and at first a lot of them would come and rubber at it. But by-em-by it got to be sort of stale, so he throwed it back behind the counter some place."

"But when spring come and the ice moved in the river, what did that darn candle do but thaw herself out and set the bloomin' store afire. Yes sir, what do you know about that?"

"Oh dear me!" cried Nora, "now I have 'bitten' on another of those stories you keep especially for cheechakos! Shall I never learn?"

"Never you mind," Janet laughed. "It gives the boys a heap o' satisfaction to be gashin' and clatterin' and gettin' a' the clavers and havers off'n their briskets! Don't it, now?"

After the laugh which Janet had turned from Nora, some one suggested that the flame in Pete's lamp was not frozen yet apparently, for it had grown quite noticeably dim "whilst we was gassin'."

"I think that seegnifies it's come time to turn in. This old Janet must knuckle to her sixty-odd and

cache herself in the blankets. Nora, 'twill be our corner here. Bald-Face has sort of a curtain to hang o'er. Haven't you, Pete? 'Tis fine.

"Come, Nora, this will be our bunk. We're in for a hard day to-morrow, if she drops—though it might fair, yet.—Good night to ye, boys!"

"Good night," chorused the friendly group beside the table, dim in the blue haze of their many pipes and the flickering smoky lamp.



## NORA FINDS HER NORTH

NEXT morning did not fulfil the jeremiads of the weather for it was much more moderate in temperature. The trail at twenty below can be excellent and town-bred Nora, taking her turn now on the swaying runners, found it a day of constant tinglish thrill. Janet soon tired of the enforced quietness of riding, however, and irked to be at her old post behind the sled.

"You're too well reared and pretty in your speech to make a proper dog-musher," she insisted. "Talk to the dogs like you mean business. This Sabba' Day patter will get you no place, with huskies. Their hides be much too thick. Dinna let them dawdle and soldier on you that-a-way."

"O Janet, this long whip gets all mixed up between my legs!" wailed Nora, half laughing and half crying with exasperation. "I wished to crack old Denny who has been lazing, well I know, and not pulling one ounce; but I hit Oolik, and I think his feelings are hurt. Look at his ears and tail, poor fellow—all flopped down!"

"Hoolie! This is no place for me," cried Janet, rolling out of the sled and taking the handle bars from Nora's not unwilling stiff tired fingers. "Give over the hellim and pile in, child. This is *my* job."

"You do rarely, conseedering; but you're orra bonnie and blithe with your coaxing and you haven't the right cussedness in command, to make an A-number-one dog musher. You must be mean and

evil minded with the dogs—and whoop at 'em—even as old Janet!" she laughed, gripping the bars and giving the sled a mighty shake.

"Now then, you huskies—mush on! Haur! awa', you blithering wolf whelps, you! Make tracks! Get the Sam Hill out of this!"

And the team leaped to the collar and whirled away in a flurry of snow and waving bushy tails, as fresh and ambitious as one could wish.

"'Tis language does it," was Janet's grinning comment.

That was a long day's pull, but very late in the dusk-gathering afternoon they saw below them the new little camp that was their destination. Night fell before they could reach down to it, however, and the winter lights of the Aurora flickered and flared and waved grotesquely in the north sky. The dogs were very tired and Janet had been walking behind the sled for several miles past, sometimes pushing.

When she began to look the diggings over that next day, her usual optimism met a definite set-back. The rumor that the whole creek had been staked was, in this instance, true.

"You see, child," she explained to Nora, "the first man to uncover colors on a creek stakes a claim there. His claim is known as 'Discovery'—on such-and-such a creek—whatever he might choose to name his findings. He will have fifteen hundred feet up and down the burnside, and his slice is three hunder feet wide.

"Now these braw lads that made deescovery here, just hogged the whole cruckit glen. Never let any one else in on it, when they struck the pay, till they had staked the whole blame thing themselves."

"But if their claims are only three hundred feet

wide, why can't we stake our claims over on one side of them? Wouldn't that be lawful?"

"Up yonder on the bench?" asked Janet. "Well, we're restrickt to that, for it's all there's left to us. But there's small hope of getting orra gold from up there, girly, so dinna set your heart upon it. Nobody knows yet how this creek will pan out, until next spring when they can start sluicing. The first clean-up will show, likely."

The snow was very light upon the hills and so they spent some days exploring all the country thereabouts, Janet looking for a likely location and Nora keeping her now loosed and excited tongue busy to shape the thousand questions about gold mining that came crowding to her mind. For it all seemed to her sheer yellow magic, and something which she did not in the least understand!

"Janet, tell me—I know I'm dreadfully ignorant—but you say the gold is down there in the gravels at creek bottom. How does it come to be there, Janet? Where does it come from?"

The weatherbeaten old prospector tried to make clear then how, through successive years too numerous for men to count, tiny edacious streams and the strong tug of Time had pulled and worn at ancient hills. Or, in another place where some prehistoric glacier had once worked as Nature's stamp mill, moving sheets of the inexorable ice had picked up mountains, sheared them flat, ground them to gravels. Janet, for all the practical Scotch of her, was dream-possessed in matters that pertained to gold long hidden in the pockets of the hills—as every prospector is one part dreamer. He should, if he would win the substance of his dream, tread the impalpable march of Time itself, cast back his mind to picture solid

Earth in flux, a universe evolving out of Chaos. Throwing imagination across the æons, he must see Nature in her youth—earth forming, heaving into space, erupting, belching, bending, twisting, shaping—and what to-day are solid metals, then soluble and flowing things thrust vein-like up through rocky dikes and sills, in minute particles absorbed at last into the earth's tissue, enriching it. Out of that heat and torment, the pressure and the travail of creation, his mind must sense the stringers and the lodes of that arterial heart-core upcast into her hills, embedded there. As mountain ridges stiffen into earth crust, the earth-wise one sees other changes coming—hills washed down and eroded by the gnaw of water, frost and wind, the constant pull of massy gravitation, the lesser work of all the lesser years innumerable, almost incalculable.

Yet in that "almost" lies the substance of his dream, and in it rests the treasure of his hope. With Chance as partner—one more often treacherous and fickle than helpful, kind or loyal—he pits a puny self against the ineluctable mystery and majesty of Creation: a scrap of dear-bought human wisdom against the mountain-thundering laws of Genesis. Armed with a little stick of steel he goes down to the bottoms of the mountains. "The Earth with her bars is about him forever." Small wonder he must be of stoutish heart, brass bound in triplicate against all fear. Small wonder he must cherish precious dream, for while half his toil is backbreak and sour beans and "sow belly," that other half is dream-possessed and leaps from dust of the long travail of his days, to laughing stars!

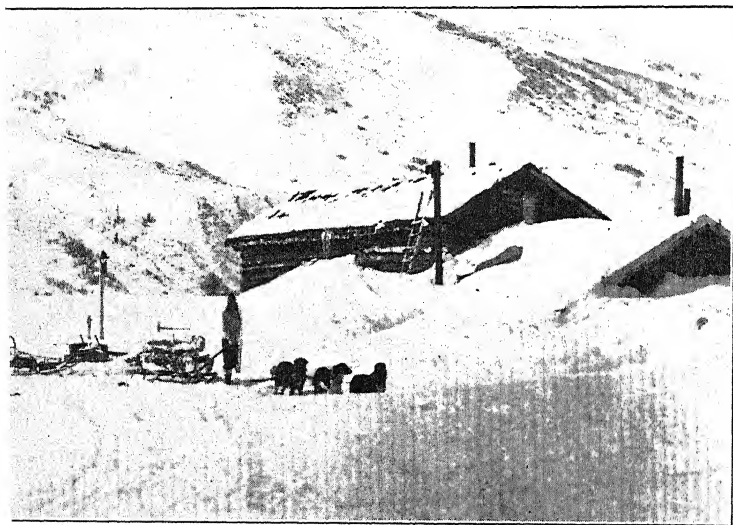
Something of this the older woman tried to tell and Nora quickly caught its dream-truth—much



*Courtesy of Harry Steele.*  
"WHILE HALF HIS TOIL IS BACKBREAK, THAT OTHER HALF IS DREAM-POSSESSED."



THE SLED'S NOSE WAS FIRMLY BRACED AGAINST A TELEPHONE POLE.



THE LOG ROAD-HOUSE WHERE THEY HAD PLANNED TO SPEND THE NIGHT."



more quickly than another might, because she was herself at heart a poet and saw with legend-lighted Celtic eyes the myth and mystery that Janet felt so strongly, but found small word for. Shaemas O'Sheel could not, she thought, have had Alaskan prospectors in mind, and yet those words of his seemed true of them—as to all hearts that push the sea and land away or split the sky in two—

“—The ruin of worlds that fall he views from eternal  
arches,  
And rides God's battlefield in a flashing and golden  
car.”

Standing upon a barren hill above the straggling tent-camp, a hill blown clean of snow and naked black to winter, she visioned Nature's younger self pulsing with golden veins. She saw the stooping figure of old graybeard Time, with his unhurried and unresting labor, wash out alluvial gold from wastage of this crazy chain of hills and concentrate into the small space at the bottom of this creek-bed lying far below there, great fortunes for the taking—if one had luck or skill to follow the well-hidden traces of that labor.

“If all the creek is really staked, why can't we go back into the far hills, where the gold came from, and take it there, where our North's own self stored it?”

Janet explained then how, quite often, the hills from which a natural rich concentration of placer gold had once come down, were now completely worn away. In such a case it would be useless, here, to search.

“That's all those yellow-leg young scientifickers

are good for," spoke Janet, with scorn of a geology that's learned in school. "They can tell just how old any hills are, like a man tells how old a horse is by looking at its teeth. And they can sometimes tell, by looking, if hills above a creek are old enough to be of any good or not. For gold, dear, was among the first preserves old Mother Earth put down into her cellar, to hide away from her man-children till they came old enough and smart enough to find and steal it from her."

"But if the hills *are* old enough, then we could go and get it."

"Sure, dear, we could. But that would be a hard-rock proposition. In placer work, if you should strike it rich now, 'twould mean that for long centuries the tiny bits of gold have been a-washing down this burn and, since they're heavier than other rock or metal near, have slowly settled to the very bottom—to bed-rock, as we miners say. For that cause, Nora, when we stake a claim we sink a shaft to bed-rock the first thing, down through the frozen gravels of old creek beds to see what's there. If she is going to be rich, that's where the pay will likely be—right down upon the bottom of old Nature's pan. Cream rises in a pan, my girl, as you should know—but gold sinks down. But you canna just walk up to a fine hillside and scout along of it until you come upon a strip of rich gold-bearing quartz a good yard wide, and say—'Here she is!' 'Tis not done that way!"

"But suppose I *did* find a rich ledge, with 'gold-bearing quartz a yard wide'—what then?"

"Then you would be on Easy Street, my dear. The quartz men, the hard-rock men, are always searching for those mother-lodes. And when you find one, which isn't often, you have you a real mine!

Best placer ground will peter out in time, but once you've opened a good lode you've pent the goose that lays the golden egg!"

"But if it's richer, and surer too, then why don't people always hunt for lodes instead of placer gold?" Nora insisted.

"Placer is easier to find, for one. Any fool will sometimes stumble onto it, by silly chance. Your boot will turn a pebble in a stream, and you see colors. A pan is all the outfit that you need, or simple miner's cradle, or sluice box that can be outfitted out of little. 'Tis water does the most of work, in sluicing. But in the hard rock you must dig you tunnels; must work in dark and cold; must have your plenty dynamite to blast withal; and even when you've got your richest quartz, then you must have some sort of mill to concentrate it. All that takes time and unco' much o' siller, and many a man to work. What could we twa poor lassies do with such a proposition? But one lad all his lone—or two at most—can placer mine.

"So, many a camp will start with just twa-three old prospector, then other men all up and down the creek-side. And when the cream of golden dust begins to peter out, a few lads then will get together and, if they can afford it, will buy themselves a dredge that will float in its tidy puddle all up and doon the creek, and chew up with its steely jaw—machinery and steam power—all the old workit-over ground. On such a lordly mess o' dirt the lads afford to handle low grade stuff—the like that never paid to touch by hand, by wee and painfully scooped pan-fuls, Nora, that break the backs o' men. It takes a mort o' fuel for power as well as plenty golden cash in hand, to build and work a gold-dredge.

"Another bunch of lads will hike into the hills and strive to find the quartz in place from which the golden placers came. An they should find a likely outcrop, they'll drive a tunnel into there, to see how far she is extendit. If she is big enough in pay, they'll chip in and set up their stamp mill—doing in a day, my girl, with crushers, stamps, an' jigs an' tanks and a', what Nature did so slowly and with patience through her long centuries: the same task, concentrating gold from rocks in which old Earth has hid it.

"That's now the place we're come to, here in our Alaska. The chance for one of the great placer strikes again, folks tell you, is sma'. But I'm an old dog and can't learn new tricks. Let them build dredges and scoop up their gravels by their tons. Let them dig ditches and bring down whole rivers from the hills, hydraulic to their heart's content. That's where the ready pay is now—but not for Janet!"

"It isn't so romantic, is it? I know just what you mean."

"No, lass—yet there are mighty fortunes got so. But you must salt with gold to catch the gold. There's Treadwell can afford to handle ore worth but a few odd coppers to the ton. But they run thousand tons each day through that great mill, and so it pays them. I went to that place whilst I was at Juneau, on my way back home. The roar of stamps near deafened me! I'd rather pan out my few dollars worth o' dust a day, in some quiet glen out in the loneliness, than live in midst of that uproar and own the whole of it!"

They stood on a divide that overlooked broad uplands and many a muskeg bottom. The world was

white, the far horizon boundless. No sound came from that wide and open wilderness, no human cry or stir of any life. It seemed a primal world, Earth brooding solitary and issuing her challenge to the soul of man to take, to conquer—if he dared. Here his imprinted coin and other symbols of a man-made world were meaningless. He must grip hold of what he takes with his bare fists, must grapple here alone unaided by his human pack.

—“What do we do next, with the bench claims that we staked?” asked Nora, when they were returning.

“Come spring, I will mush over and start about getting down to bed-rock. We must go down through the old sand and gravel that stream has draggit down, for centuries. Of course we have to thaw all this ground first. I’ll hire me a good handy lad or two and we’ll reik-out a windlass and a hoise, heeze up the pay-dirt (if we chance on aught) and place it in a crib.

“Then, soon as I can get some water to it, I’ll sluice the pay. Swift water from the burn carries the soft earth and light gravel all away and nought but gold remains, as ’tis so orra hefty it will sing an ever it is caught ’twixt riffles. When we can brush the glinty gold from out those riffles, that will be our first clean-up!”

“How much shall we be getting?”

“Losh, lass, some hunder millions gold has come from out Alaska, men say—though I am weak on counts, myself! But if we take us out a-plenty to pay for hoist and thaw and summer’s grub—and maybe wages of a man or two to help me with the work, first crack—we’ll play in rare good luck, for I’d say aff-hand they’re as unlikely claims ever I

stakit. But a chancy day will sure befa' me yet, for all that. So I go on, spawning my plans, like herring!"

When they returned to camp it was already dark but they found an excited group of men gathered at the bar. Bjornson, one of the first to stake on the creek bottom, had been at work in his shaft thawing ground and had been killed that day by a fall of loosened earth. The man's wife and his little girl lived in a cabin on the claim and the woman learned of the accident only when her husband did not come for dinner and she had gone to call him. The yellow god is sometimes cruel, demanding human sacrifice.

The two newcomers went at once to see what they could do for this stricken family, since they were the only other women in the little settlement.

"We had a time to quieten her," Janet reported later, "and there is but one thing to do. The woman and the bonnie bairn cannot stay on here, that is certain. Grub is too dearthful, there's no work left for her, and she is wishful to go back at once to her ain folk. 'Tis natural, but they live out in Minnesota, boys, and this poor lad that drew a blank here wi' us hadna tippence to his name. He had but just begun to work upon this claim, as you well know; and I misdoubt there's aught in but-and-ben over there, or yet on their twa backs, would fetch six bits at any sale.

"I'll take the woman and the child back home to Fairbanks with me, when we've earthit this poor lad decent. Do some o' ye get busy, now, and thaw a grave out there besouth beyond yon hill, in some fair sightly place near-hand, early to-morrow's morn. For so it is, lads. —In a gliff, a' goes by, and we flichter hame.

"But 'tis cold cash they're wanting, now, and only

next week Yuletide's drawing nigh. You boys ken what that would seegnify, to a small thing."

"We'll fix it for the woman and the child all right, Mis' Aitken," spoke one, "and we'll sure see that Bjornson is buried decent."

"I well knew that, boys. So I brought along this sock of the wee one's. I'll hang it here just by the bar and I am thinking 'twould be fair and kindly if we all put into that stocking what we could. If you've no better notion, then, I'll just sweeten this fore-foot myself'."

And Janet reached beneath her parka, to the pockets of the corduroys she wore, and brought out a thin moose-hide poke of yellow gold dust. A full half of this she emptied into the toe of the child's sock.

No man but reached for his poke, too. The long narrow stocking took on shape, its sides filled out, as each contributed with hands that did not know how to be niggard.

"O Janet, the little thing is full!" cried Nora. —"See, I can't close the top."

The man at the bar "hefted" the unique poke with practiced hand.

"That'll run a good two thousand, Mis' Aitken, Ma'am. It'll sure take the little kid and her Ma safe back to Minnesoty, all right—and good luck to them."

Later, when they were alone, Janet noticed Nora's dejection.

"What is it, lass? The poor woman and the wee one? They'll be well heeled now in no near-be-gaun fashion, and she'll be happy enough back home with her own kith and her kin. Dinna worry yourself ower them. Life for her here was but a weary

wrastle all the time of it.—'Tis the chance o' the North."

"It isn't that," Nora answered. "I wanted to give something, too. I wanted to help the poor woman. But I had nothing to give."

"Fegs, child, I saw you gi'e to her the poke of sweeties that you fetched from home. When we are back again in Fairbanks ye can give a giftie then, an you'll still be wishful, to the weanie."

"No, but you don't understand," insisted Nora. "I'll have no golden pound to spend, even then."

"And why not ask Kaspar for it? He has a routh o' gear and you're his lawful wife, feer for feer, for better for waur, worthy of share and share."

"But that is just my trouble, Janet. I cannot ask him."

"Dinna speak such nonsense, that ye dare not ask the man for sixpence! Kaspar Kithil is able and plenty to provide his wife with money, gin ye ask him. Mayhap he's not so like to speir, 'are you wantin',' but ye must see to it that he does, so. Ye live now in a land of free folk, Nora. Ye must not be so put-upon. Speak up wi' glib proud tongue. Lads are not always understanding about such small matters."

"It's no small matter, Janet. It's a great sum—or it seems great to me, who've less than nothing. All of my lengthy passage out from home was paid for. I took this as a gift of love. I have learned since that, taking it, I sold myself. All that I have not spoken of, nor can, I know that you, my friend, have rightly guessed. I am bondwoman, Janet, chained by my own once stupid folly of the heart. No gal-leon of gold moidores could fully ransom me.

"But gold could make so much more bearable the



daily gall of taunt I suffer. If I could pay that certain debt of coin I'm owing—Gold could not wipe what's past away but it could put a salve of easement upon the hurt that chain has made deep down inside of me. If I could only pay that bond of debt —— O Janet! Do you think that possibly, that somehow, I could ever pay? Then in my own mind, though not otherwise, I *might* be free again. Until that debt is paid—if that can be—I shall know neither peace nor hope."

"Ye must be free. This vexes me. I cannot have my Nora fashed and chainit. And yet—we've made the North our partner this sad day, my girl. Ye and I are but silly women folk, wi' water in our een this nicht complainin' here about our little strength. But we have taken claim and covenant with a strong character of unco' richness—the Land we old ones call God's Pocket. Have faith in her—not Janet's pick nor pan! The moment folk begin to clapper of 'Our North'—the way my ear was keen to catch *you* do, this day—I ken there's hope for betterness. Your little feet may wander from her, years to come; but once you've said that word 'Our North,' unthinking, your heart will rest here, wheresoe'er you're straying. And where your heart is, there is treasure.

"Lands give you back only what you have given them in fair exchange of barter, is my rede. What is there more of worth to give, than leal of partnership expressit in that 'our,' which slipped out from your tongue this chanceful day?"

\* \* \* \* \*

A true prospector would end his story here. Old Janet would, I know. But if you are like other folk,

you'll ask—as I myself so often have—"But did they find it?"

When Janet came back from Arvada the next summer, a fascinated Nora watched as she emptied into pans several fat pokes of golden yellow sand from their own claims. They went together to the bank to see the dusty treasure weighed. In a few days they had between them no less than twenty thousand dollars, even after all expenses of the work to date had been met. A portion must be put back into the claims for further development and necessary machinery, but Nora's share was much more than enough to pay the ransom money over which her heart had brooded.

"I had small expectation from those bench-claim," Janet confessed. "I was that crossit when I learned the lads had hogged the creek, I would have turnit back without staking. But you were dead set on it, Nora, and 'twas your first stampede. I wadna deesappoint."

"To think we've struck an old bed o' the creek, where all the richest pay would be! The poor bodys down below, that had hastit so, are scarce wage-making.—Didna my auld heart leap light and my auld eyes blink with joy, when I first glimpsed the ruddy colors in the crease of the pan!

"The ancient burn-side might pinch out to nothing, nethermore, but we'll take out all that we can and we might well see muckle more of it, for all that. I sampled a long strip and still was in the pay. Some dirt there will go better nor fifty to the yard; but it all carries colors and every bucket hoistit will have gold to it. A wee stake to salt away will do for old Janet's need, the lave of her life. For I'm no a child longer and 'tis near lowsintime, when wearie

working beasties would rest their neck from the red-land furrow."

"But actually no part of this is really mine, Janet. I did no work. I helped in no way. I merely wrote my name upon a strip of land. It is all yours. It is not mine."

"That bit of ground you set your stake upon, my girl, is whence the rich pay came. Ken that. We asked one other partner for her help—and she has answered us. The word is plain, Nora. Be not so blindit with some falseness of small pride, ye'll not accept what ye have asked of her and she herself has freely given. 'Twould be a meanness, and unworthy of ye. All I would know is, will you be going back now to the Old Country—now you've leash?"

But Nora found herself like a dazed votary who prayed with passion for a miracle—yet when that miracle did actually occur, would doubt the evidence of senses! She had so earnestly desired a means to pay this debt that hung upon her neck with weight of a slave-driver's chain. Now she was free to go. She had already learned the custom of her new country and knew that legal divorce would be easy. With this money in hand, and what was yet to come, she could go out at once to her own people—go with open hands and generous. Yet her pride told her she could never go back to that childhood home, alone. And something deeper—a loyalty that she but half could realize as yet—held her even more strongly. To accept this golden gift of freedom, this generous unstinted gift, bound her more firmly to the land of its origin than ever the old bond of gold had done. Many a time that winter she had read, in Janet's well-worn little book, those words which

Robert Service wrote about the Spirit of the North, reproaching her ungenerous lost children of the great stampede:

“Dreaming alone of a day,  
When men shall not rape my riches and curse me  
and go away—”

And Nora too had come to see this North as woman: One whom a man might struggle to possess, and strangely hate after her yielding; but to another woman—to her and Janet—that mighty friendship might mean untold peace.

Those words which had so bitten into Nora's memory came flashing to her now in the hour of decision. Untainted gold, washed with the melted snows from off the hills, purified now in the fire of an assayer's furnace—it was her own, gift from this brooding land where silences are spawned.

—A strange land indeed to which, from diverse quarters of the far-stretched globe, had come such diverse children bearing such diverse gifts. And how strangely she repaid them, offering to each gifts in return, after his very will! This land was truly human, and in some strange caprice had blessed her with this fortune. For to Nora it seemed indeed a fortune, out of the very depths of “God's Pocket.”

Could this be, after all, that land of Tirnanogue which she had ignorantly sought? What if the high gods had not then misled, but brought her safely to it—that hidden Inner Land of Happiness, to which a friendly word may hint a way, a friendly hand may point, but each must for himself discover?

“Janet,” she said, “I will stay on. I'll not be one to use her gift, to leave her! I'll stay and fight for

her, and with her. I, too, would be one of her builders 'of cities yet unborn'—as your friend Robbie said it.

"We shall go partners with her, you and I, and not just snatch our golden prize and run, as did those others. Now I have paid my debt, I'm free. But now I'm free to go, I know that for me—dear, dear Janet—for me my place is here.

"And haven't we, here, all the stuff of Paradise? Everything that is good is here—enough of summer days unending, a place you wouldn't feel time passing? And on the clear of winter night, so near it is I feel that I can reach out with my fingers and pluck the very stars from out of heaven! O Janet, hear me! It's a vow I'm making. Thy country shall be my country, thy people my people."





THE CAMP

IN OUR TOWN  
THE OLD PRINTER  
LAST HOME OF THE SUN





## IN OUR TOWN

“**W**ERE you cold there *all* the time?”  
“How many months, when you can’t go out at all?”

“Do you see the sun there?”

“How cold have you really ever seen it?”

“Is the snow ever off the ground?”

“Do you live in an igloo?”

“Are there any other white people in Alaska?”

These, and a thousand other questions very like them, come crowding whenever I am “Outside” in the States and people find I’m from Alaska. Every Alaskan has a similar experience. While it amuses, yet it worries us, for these questions show such an utter misconception of our Alaskan life and what it really means. Even university groups put the same queries, seeming to imply that our Alaska is an unreal world outside of all common experience. These good folk know well that life lived in New England two hundred years ago was bearable and even comfortable. They can’t seem to realize that prospectors and trappers in Alaska to-day lead lives very much like those lived in portions of New England in those other colonial days, or that the life of our Alaskan townfolk is to-day infinitely easier than even the most affluent Bostonian of the eighteenth century could imagine, let alone achieve or enjoy.

Yet when I am in the States I find myself a curiosity to my friends and kinsfolk in Washington, New York and Boston. I am pelted incessantly with questions such as those I have just quoted; for the

place-name of Alaska seems to mean to these friends only the Alaska of a generation ago—the Alaska of Klondike days (And the Klondike, though they don't seem to realize it, isn't even a part of Uncle Sam's Alaska but is in British Yukon Territory!), the Alaska of Rex Beach's adventures and of rushing diphtheria antitoxin to Nome by the antiquated and unnecessary means of a dog team, to satisfy front page headlines, when airplanes were available and ready to go!

Now I myself have lived and nursed through an epidemic in the North much more widespread and disastrous than the Nome diphtheria (though we were far too busily at work fighting the plague, to find a time to put our troubles on the wire); I have travelled many days at a time with dogs and sleds, when no other method of locomotion was possible; I have kept house in every-day womanly fashion in my Arctic home for several years; I have also "seen the sun," at midnight and otherwise; and I have usually worn the legal normalcy—no more, no less—of clothes very similar to those in which my eastern friends take so much interest.

And so, in honest answer to their questions I am forced to say: "I've never suffered from the cold in all my Alaska years, though I have lived just under the Arctic Circle. Our houses are built to resist cold. Our outdoor winter clothes are adequate. Indoors in winter we are much more apt to be too warm, than cold! I've *felt* cold more on Boston Common or walking down Michigan Avenue than I ever did in Alaska. In Our Town we have never known such raw and blasty winter winds as Boston and Chicago have. That is sworn truth."

I've seen it sixty-eight degrees below—just once.

I've also seen it ninety-eight above—and other temperatures above ninety, many times in Our Town. Though Fairbanks lies in one of the coldest sectors of Alaska, our air is brilliantly dry in winter and amazingly still and windless in the very coldest weather, not a snow-gemmed twig a-quiver. Our deepest cold is similar to the lowest temperatures in Montana, with no more and often fewer degrees of frost. As for the mild Coast sections of our Territory where most of our colonials live, a friend in Ketchikan "the first city of Alaska," has just written me under date of February 12, 1931: "The geraniums in my window-boxes are still alive; the delphiniums are up three inches and all the spring shrubs are in leaf. There has been no skating at all this winter, not even any sledding for the children."

We who live in winter-frosty Fairbanks, prefer our stiffer and invigorating climate. Alaska's coast people prefer their own Seattle-California-like mild moistures. That's as it should be, for we Alaskans are not all built alike nor are our cities. But as to never stirring out of doors in winter—that is sheer arrant nonsense! Even in my own sub-Arctic town I've never once been kept indoors by weather, nor have I ever known the schools to close because of a deep cold spell. Even the smallest children seem to thrive on it.

Do we ever see the sun here?—The very notion is enough to set Alaskans into wild hysterics! In summer we see the sun so brilliantly and constantly, we fairly long for winter nights again; for the sun is ever present the summer long, rolling about the northern sky in Our Town's northern part of this supra-continent. Midnight-sun airplane flights are immensely popular with our numerous summer tour-

ists, and a recent clipping from the *San Francisco Examiner* proves that Alaskans are not above the ancient folly of sending coals to Newcastle:

"Flowers from Alaska may sound to the average Californian like snow from the Sahara, but proof of the fact that some of the finest blossoms in the world grow in America's most northern possession will be given at the California State Fair this year.

"State Fair directors announced to-day that an Alaskan floral exhibit will be brought here by airplane for the exposition period, August 30 through September 7.

"The Alaska flowers, according to present plans, will be entered in competition with blossoms from the San Francisco Bay region, the Sacramento Valley and other sections of California which contribute to make the State Fair's annual flower show one of the most colorful and varied displays in the world.

"The northern 'blossom plane' is expected to take off in Alaska the midnight before the exposition opens, arriving in Sacramento the next afternoon, with one stop in Seattle."

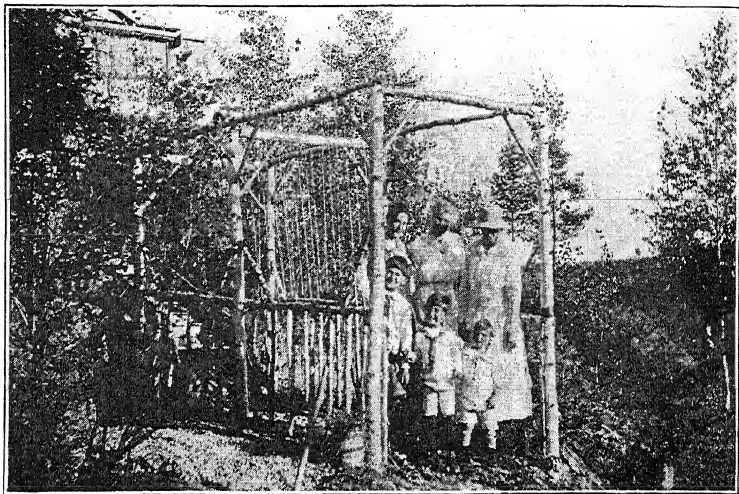
In turning over some old letters sent to my husband's mother, I found this, written July 29, 1923:

"We have been having some very warm weather for the last few weeks. For ten days it has been above ninety and if it had not been for our large porch, which Allen has screened and which we have furnished as a room for the summer, we should perish. As it is, I have been living out here all day and have not moved from the house. I bring my work here in the morning, and simply SIT. I have my sewing and my writing and my Corona here and have done a lot, in spite of the heat. When the President was here two weeks ago there were three

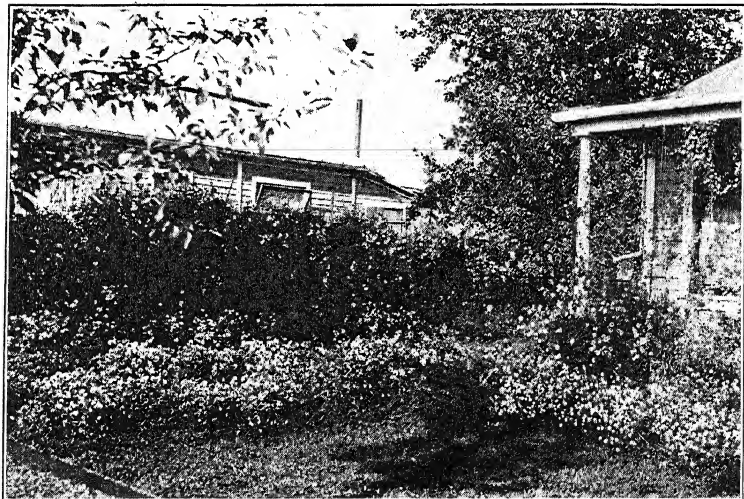


*Photograph by Marier Brothers.*

OUR TOWN.



SUMMER DAYS IN OUR TOWN.



"IS SNOW EVER OFF THE GROUND?"

heat-prostrations, so you can see that we are not frozen up ALL of the year!"

Our home in Fairbanks is a house of frame that would do credit to the suburbs of any city. The new Court House in Fairbanks is to be of concrete and steel, will occupy an entire block, be three stories high, have a tower to house the local Weather Bureau—and an elevator! A friend writes from Juneau: "The new Capitol building is to be dedicated here to-morrow, with great celebration." No white person in Alaska lives in an igloo—and precious few Eskimos do! The snow igloo is practically unknown to Alaskan Innuits, and Stefansson has told how he had to teach his Eskimo companions to build them. Snow igloos are a cute trick—for an emergency hunting lodge or when caught out over night without shelter—if you have moist and wind-packed snow. But in Interior Alaska our deep-winter snow is gritty, dry and fine, not the good packing kind—as snow-tractors have sometimes found to their sorrow. When very cold, it's more like sand or a coarse flour than slippery sled-snow.

"Igloo" indeed! In Ketchikan, Alaska, there are 1,100 telephones; and 1,542 homes and business houses are electrically equipped, according to the figures of the Citizens Light, Power and Water Company. Ketchikan also claims that, in proportion to her population, she has more electric ranges in use than any city in the United States—one to each 7.4 persons. Do you know of any city in the States that can better this record? Fairbanks has had a telephone system almost since its birth thirty years ago, and only last fall we installed the newest and most modern type of central switchboard. When our new theater that seats 670 people was opened in

August, 1927, a fine Kimball organ was dedicated; and when the first "talkie" was given here in March of 1930, a special train was run for the occasion to bring in all the Suntrana, Healy Fork and Nenána "suburbanites" who wished to celebrate. Loge seats were reserved at "ten bits per" and shows were given at both seven and nine, in metropolitan fashion. Anchorage has a new Piggly Wiggly and Fairbanks is promised one soon; the price of gasoline has recently been cut two cents, to the delight of our all-inclusive auto population; and the shelves of our Public Library contain new shipments of the latest books. Radio is getting to be so popular that in Cordova "persons operating defective electric equipment, thereby interfering with radio reception, will be prosecuted," under notice given by City Attorney Frank H. Foster. And our Fairbanks City Fathers recently passed an ordinance forbidding the use of all electric motors after six P. M.—because, forsooth, they interfere with radio reception! That prevents one friend of mine, who is employed in office day-times, from using her electric washing machine at night, or vacuum sweeper. The local hair dressers and beauty parlors can't use some of their appliances, either. But we are modern Pilgrims, up to date. We want the latest thing from the Home Country and we must have even that "*mira sane ope Marconiana*," as Papa Ratti (so our Italian neighbor calls him, lovingly) said the other night, speaking from HVJ.

—I love Alaska not only because my home has been here but for the many lessons of patience, courage and true understanding that Alsaka and her people have taught me. And because I do so love the country, it hurts to have her so misunderstood—



as one would resent the misappreciation of a dear friend by an uninformed outsider.

For Alaska to-day, though not perhaps a woman's country, yet appeals strongly as a great challenging personality to a certain type of woman—the woman who, irrespective of her physical make-up, has (in that old-fashioned and to-day seldom mentioned portion of her, one-time called a soul!) some hand-down of the pioneering strain. There are many women in Alaska to-day—women of all varieties, women such as you and I ourselves are—and between us we are doing a part in making over all that old Alaska that once was (Alaska of the days of the gold-stampedes, about whose high spots Beach and London and Service wrote so vividly) into an American colony of homes and children and schools. We are beginning, through woman's jury bills and school legislation and the prick of civic pride, to have no little and gentle hand in reshaping this vast wilderness of raw empire material into something livable and homish; just as Pilgrim mothers in another century, although the distaff side of that adventure has not been given suitable publicity, had their hand and say-so too in the shaping and settling of another equally supposed wilderness, in the far-away and "must be always frozen" colony of New England.

Alaska's women are engaged in every lively business, from prospecting to jury duty. Pioneer women are all workers, and the woman who works is independent—it is the woman who has forgotten how to work who has lost her freedom. There are not too many women here, so Alaskan men have never feared our influence and suffrage is a matter of course, woman's enfranchisement being the first bill ever passed by the Alaska Legislature. Our woman's

knack, if we have any, lies in the field of intimate human relations; and surely that is a good "knack" to find employed on any jury! Women seek happiness more consciously, perhaps, than men do. But we who live upon the Northern marches, know that elusive Happiness shows no decided preference for low latitudes. You fetch it with you when you go on pilgrimage, or else you never had it. "Hitching your wagon to the Great Bear or to the Southern Cross," says Janet, "don't seem to make a speck of differ!" If there be some who find our life here narrow and monotonous, so they would find it elsewhere, I'm afraid. It's true, I have a few acquaintances who use the geographical hook to hang complaint upon; but I've a feeling that dissatisfaction elsewhere would be just as real, though hung upon some other nub of fact. Any psychological burden will bear more heavily upon us than on a man, just because our threshold of consciousness is lower, more open to a quickness and a subtlety of impression. But, by that same more quick response we get a swifter and at times a deeper joy from our experience here, a more abiding emotional pleasure.

—At least, that is the sum of what I've learned, through years of knowing closely, in intimate warm contacts, my neighbors of the North. Of the most difficult Northern trails and days of '98, a friend who lives now in the East but came into the Klondike during the great stampede—a physician, graduate of three great universities in America and Europe—said this to me not very long ago: "I saw plenty of men get cold feet that year, but no woman who did. The hardship didn't feaze or craze them, as it did so many men."

Our Town sprang up in the days of the Gold Rush,

more than a quarter century ago. A group of log cabins staggered along a winding river bank has gradually become a town of 2,000 souls, with churches, schools, a hospital, a bank, a movie theater, streets that know some regularity, and stores that grew from trading posts; for raw furs and gold dust were still taken over their counters, as media of exchange from trappers and prospectors, when I first came North. When we hitched our own "wani-gan" to the star Pólaris, our household goods must come 2,700 miles by steamer from Seattle to Saint Michael at the mouth of the Yukon, and then up the river 1,200 miles by slow stern-wheeler craft, a matter of many weeks—quite as many, indeed, as the Pilgrims one time took in reaching Plymouth. Unlike the Atlantic, however, our great Yukon is open for navigation only four months of the year while during the remaining months it freezes solidly. Time was when we were almost completely isolated during winter and "letter mail only" came to us then over 500 miles of bitterly wind-blown trail, through mountains that never let you near and hills whose heads seemed to touch heaven. Any one absolutely needing to leave the country in mid-winter, for sickness or business, had to face many days of grueling land travel involving some actual risk and ending in a week's sea voyage on the mis-named Pacific.

The Government Railroad, which now terminates at Our Town, has eliminated many of these one-time hardships. In former years, merchants had to ship enough supplies during the short summer to last them throughout all the winter. In the spring of the year a shipment of eggs, oranges and lemons would arrive about the twentieth of May "over the ice,"

via Lake Lebarge in Canada. Freight rates by this route were very high. At time of summer solstice, the first water-borne freight would be coming in, while from the first to the fourth of July the first large consignment of merchandise would arrive—with usually our last year's Christmas presents! The final large shipments used to leave Seattle about the twentieth of August, and after that date freight rates were advanced ten per cent. This was an urge to early shopping, before freeze-up.

As freeze-up time drew near, the river boats plowed through slush ice which clung solidly to paddle wheels, but iron sheets fastened on their bows kept sharp ice cakes from cutting into plank. Ham and bacon (fresh when they left Seattle) would often become moldy and stale before next spring and would need to be washed, cleaned and hung up to dry before salable! Eggs that arrived in September had to last at least until April, and many an old-timer will tell you how he made a winter grub-stake "waving a wicked candle in front of ancient hen-fruit or mas-saging the sprouts often a few tons of spuds, that was a carry-over in Bill's store."

That is Alaska as once it was, the Alaska you have read about. But it exists no longer—in Our Town at least—since the completion of the Government Railroad in 1923, connecting Fairbanks the year round with open ports and all the markets of the Pacific. Those old hard days can never come again unless—unthinkable disaster—Congress should ever take from us our life-giving railroad. Such action would indeed set back the clock of all-Alaska progress: from the growth to-day of ripening colonial cities, back to the era of a silent moose- and wolf-ranged land again.

One has to keep always in mind the huge spread of Alaska, in speaking of the quality of winter—that often-talked-about deep “winter cold” which most Outsiders think insuperable barrier to “White” living here. Official Weather Bureau reports show that minimum temperatures upon Alaska’s coast are not so low as in some southern states, including Alabama! The Aleutians have *never* experienced zero temperature near sea level; January mean temperature at the seaport of Cordova is higher than in Albany or Chicago; Ketchikan is warmer than St. Louis, Cincinnati or New York; and Sitka, Alaska’s Russian capital, is but two-tenths of a degree cooler the year round than is Washington, D. C. A mid-winter day taken at random (January 7, 1930) shows no official record of any snow at all at Juneau, Ketchikan, Dutch Harbor or Saint Paul Island, while Fairbanks (just below the Arctic Circle) has twelve and one-half inches, Eagle ten, Point Barrow (the most northern point within U. S. A.) a scant fifteen. I’d really hate to disabuse you of the notion that we Alaskans are, of necessity, a hardy race; but actually one needs a deal more hardiness to winter in Vermont, parts of New York State or in northern Michigan than in most sections of Alaska!

Even in Our Town (where it is sometimes, we must admit, quite as cold as in Montana) the very fact that you can *count* upon the cold is a blessing. In November will come the first deep cold. You can plan it almost to a day, but there is no fear with the thought of it—too warm the housing. Your log cabin is securely and newly chinked. Your woodpile is high and neatly convenient. The coal-bin is full, of coal that comes from only a few miles distant, for our Interior country has an abundant underlay of

excellent coal. You are prepared, ready, expectant. The cold, when it does come, will not swoop down at you unheralded in any "spell" or fly out at you in a vicious blizzard. It comes normally, quietly, awaited. I can almost say that it comes welcomed as a friend for, to any housekeeper at least, it is a truly friendly thing.

Early in the fall the thrifty housewife will bespeak from hunters a quarter or a half of moose (according to the size of her family), half a caribou and half a mountain sheep—the finest game-meat in the world, in my opinion. Her husband or the local butcher will cut these quarters into serviceable sections as roasts, chops, steaks, and lay them out in the cache on shelves or in tubs, with slips of oiled paper in between. By next morning, for it is now November, the meat is frozen solid. Nothing can harm it now. It is preserved for you in the most admirable way, secure and clean, until one morning you say to yourself in the manner of housewives immemorial, "What SHALL we have for dinner to-night? I believe a roast of caribou, well larded with good fat bacon, would taste mighty fine." And you make a foray into your cache, armed with a hammer and ice-pick and mittens, give an expert nick to a big red-and-white chunk of solid meat, carry it inside and let it thaw all morning; or you put it in a slow oven and let it thaw and roast simultaneously. No ice bills, Madame, no slow-footed butcher boy, no middleman with his obnoxious profits—only Alaska's own bounty and Alaska's own conservation policy.

Would you have a choice dessert? During the afternoon you take a pint of cream (either the real or tinned), beat it stiff, stir in a small jar of strawberry preserve, and place this in a pyrex dish upon a shelf

in your cache. By dinner-time you have a luscious frozen cream—no ice, no salt, no freezer to be cleaned, no crank to turn. Alaska's own! Or, bake your Christmas pies in mid-November, a dozen fat and juicy mince ones as I so love to do—a whole morning an orgy of floury rollings and spiced fruity flavors. While yet steaming hot from the oven, whisk them out into the cache and put them on the topmost shelf, very high, or that delicious whiff carried across the cold still air will be sure to attract your neighbor's hungry-nosed malemites or prove too subtle a temptation for her small children. When frozen solid (as these pies soon will be, steamy aroma and all) stack them in orderly piles and cover them all neatly with a clean white cloth. Thanksgiving Day and Christmas and New Year dinner-times will bring you due deserts for such fore-handedness! And there's no better tenderer of pie-crust than the frosty cold, as any expert pastry-cook will tell you. It renders even mediocre dough inexpressibly flaky and delicious. Try it!—if you live in a fortunate place like Fairbanks where Nature runs a great cold-storage plant for you, and never sends a bill for kilowatts.

Though we do sometimes keep our chickens through the winter, they are a problem and a real care for their houses must not only be thoroughly heated but lighted as well; and with "juice" costing eighteen cents a kilowatt-hour, that is a rather heavy expense. With chickens, in the dark winter months, it is a matter of "no light, no eggs"—and what is more, at the end of the season, perfectly good dead chickens! In the old days I have seen guaranteed fresh eggs in early spring sell for five dollars a dozen, with plenty of takers. Two-fifty was the regular

and accepted winter price for fresh eggs, when I first came to Alaska. Case eggs carried through the winter, as was necessary before the coming of the railroad, were opened with a prayer or gas-mask! The building of angel cakes was not a favorite winter sport with our Alaska housewives, before the railroad cut all living costs.

There is another household consequence, not so much of cold or distance as of the relative nearness to the magnetic pole. For those of us who live within the Circle of the Arctic are constantly aware, especially in winter, that we have staked out claims not only in a highly mineralized land area but also in a highly electrified atmospheric area. I know from personal experience that to inhabit a great electrical preserve, home of the Northern Dawn, and to be neighbor of Magnetic North, all have had an effect upon our daily lives. In winter there is so much static in the air almost constantly, that one can't walk across a room and touch another body without generating a long, snappy electric spark. Our Airedale soon learned this, much to our amusement; and when he came to us across the wide Bokhara of our living room, invariably he turned his head aside and his nose down, as he snuggled to be scratched, knowing that otherwise his black wet nose would certainly receive a bee-like sting which he could neither shake nor paw away.

In winter, too, no one dares clean in gasoline a silk or woolen garment. It is actually more than one's life is worth, for two women of my acquaintance have been burned to death in so doing. Just the mere friction of lifting up material from the gasoline bath, produces such sparks in the surcharged air that an explosion almost inevitably occurs. Our



Town has been forced to pass stringent laws about gasoline storage in winter, for we use our cars even in the most severe weather. The very deep cold has an effect on kerosene that is both amusing and disconcerting. It makes an emulsion of it, thick and white and not always easy to ignite. Here at the Arctic you feel constantly like another Alice in Wonderland—or Blunderland—running daily and hourly into most unfamiliar aspects of most familiar things.

We live upon the fairways of uncommon happenings, in Our Town. On March 11 of last year, a notable group representing three great northwestern peoples met at our "Farthest North College in the World"—Russian, Canadian and American airmen, members of the Eielson-Borland searching crew—one heart, one purpose. Our Town had taken a stiff practical course that winter in international relations. Many, who months before had "hated Russia," had now come through contacts with the generous helpful Russian fliers to respect and cherish them as friends. One of our leading citizens, who once said "I'd rather have my hand cut off than shake hands with those murderers and assassins," was seen to run at full speed all across the flying-field, to grasp and wring with honest fervor the hands of Slepnev and of Fahrig. Commander Slepnev was heard to say, "I have read of American culture. When I return to Russia I am going to translate American culture to our schools there." Our Fairbanks mayor, when many years ago he was a practicing physician in Petrograd, had visited the home of a certain Russian gentleman and met there his small son. That boy turned out to be the Fabio Fahrig, mechanic on the giant Russian Junkers which played—through

cold, storms, winter darkness—their notable and kindly part in search for our two neighbors, Carl Ben Eielson and Earl Borland, lost in Siberia. Captain Pat Reid, commander of Canadian fliers, regretted that his people could have done no more but spoke with feeling of the mutual help all three great Northwest peoples had exerted during the last sad month. Friends of my own who had been born in Russian Poland, unraveled their Russian vocabularies for this occasion and talked without interpreters to Slepnev and to Fahrig. These told me that the Russians seemed deeply truly touched by the American hospitality, while our own local fliers all acknowledged that these Russians were more efficient and had far better planes than we have.—A single, brotherly, human gesture of lively sympathy had demobilized for us a national hatred, taught us new and real international relations.

Our Town is not, you see, provincial—not bound to local or parochial issues, narrow vistas. We dwell upon the fairways of the North, the International Highway of the future. Fresh beliefs, fresh contacts, fresh new avenues of high adventure, fly to us daily through the unbound air. Our cabins do not know monotony of "bastard villadom," disfiguring the city's environs; ten thousand pupils are enrolled in our Alaskan schools, and half of these are Whites, half Natives; 109 students registered last year at the Alaska College, built upon the outskirts of Our Town. This number was for regular college courses only and does not include the many short-course adult students. Thirty-five undergraduates are girls and seventy-four boys, while the freshman class numbers fifty-five. Fourteen out of eighteen graduates from the Fairbanks High School in 1930 were

native-born Alaskans, and thirteen entered the Alaska College. And if you think that law of neither man nor God "runs north of fifty-three," then read this recent letter from a friend in Ketchikan, painting a glowing sketch of old familiar things, transplanted to our North:

"At St. Johns, we heard the St. Cecelia Mass on midnight Christmas eve. Our Father Carpenter belongs to the Anglo-Catholic party, and so we had an elaborate and beautiful service. The church was packed, all candle-lit, the two-hour festival of music very lovely. The day before, we women decorated; and it was warm in the church and all smelly with pine and cedar. The organist was practicing and we sent up requests for favorites, all the old glorious Christmas hymns. I think we really *felt* like Christmas!"

Edmund Burke once said that "numbers in their nature imply poverty." The opposite is also true, in certain senses; and perhaps the very fewness of Alaskans, with our ten miles of space apiece, is blessing in disguise because it makes for mental freedom and an economic independence unknown amongst the jumble of the crowds. Then too, being so few, we come to know each other better. "Gossip" means God's sib or kin—a good word fallen into disrepute—and we know many a goodly gossip, here. In cities, social life is apt to be so irritatingly hydraulic. The grinding process has gone on so long there, all the pebbles are worn smooth with similarity. Process of segregation, too, has been so long in operation in the old communities that all the human particles of the same social size and mental weight have settled down neatly together, in a nice comfortable old creek-bottom—like Janet's placer gravels—

following the old social law of gravity that *pares cum paribus congregunter*. In old communities it seems almost impossible to meet people who differ greatly from yourself in race, face, grace, or place. It takes a deliberate going out from one's own ticketed class to accomplish this in cities, either extreme daring or extreme carelessness of consequences. But here the very roll-call of the names of friends is like an open sesame to new adventure! Here we can't prop our social pride with ancient bar dexter of heraldry. On the Last Frontier the human strata are not laid down evenly and smoothly, but jostled and up-ended, so that most social geologic periods touch and mingle here. The pin-stripe nether garments appropriate to elegant Prince Albert upperments, may not adorn our men's legs of an afternoon—feet may be innocent of dove-toned spats; but, as my Janet often quotes, there is with us "the pith o' sense, and pride o' worth—for a' that!"

And even in wild corners of the land, where towns are not as yet nor any sable frock of priest nor settled law, things still are done in decency and order, as nearly as may be, by the old common law of innate sense of fit propriety. Upon a tree, along a lonely long-disused-now trail, you may (if you are lucky) find this marriage notice, signed, sealed and witnessed many years ago—a symbol of declared intent quite as effective as though the words were posted upon some church door:

Ten miles from the Yukon,  
By the bank of this lake—  
For a partner to Koyukuk,  
McGillis I'll take.

We have no preacher,  
We have no ring;  
It makes no difference,  
It's all the same thing.

(Signed) AGGIE DALTON.

I swear by my gee-pole  
Under this tree,  
Husband faithful to Aggie  
I always will be.

I'll love and protect  
This maiden so frail,  
From the Sourdough Stiffs  
On the Koyukuk trail.

(Signed) JACK MCGILLIS.

For two dollars apiece  
In Cheechako money,  
I unite this couple  
In holy matrimony.

He be a miner,  
And she be a teacher—  
I do this job  
Just as well as a Preacher.

(Signed) FRENCH JOE.

## THE OLD PRINTER

I'VE told you something of the doings "In Our Town;" yet every time I use that term it reminds me (as it would any Fairbanks Old-timer) not of a place but of a person. That person is "W. F.," for many years the editor and publisher of our *Daily News Miner*.

During his riper years, W. F. ran a column of personal comment, wit and wisdom and salty reflections on every subject in the heavens above or in the earth beneath—a column headed with those words "In Our Town." Each evening as we heard the thump of paper thrown by newsboy on the porch, we hurried to the door thinking, "What has W. F. got to say to-night, I wonder?" Even during days of world-wide war, his animadversions were usually read and chuckled over before the news from France. And through many a long drawn post-war winter, when hopes grew dim and it seemed as though the promised railroad never would be finished or the new day it was to bring for our colonial aspirations would never break in dawn, even then W. F.'s unswerving faith in Our Town and in all things truly Alaskan, fed our flat spirits with his bitter-sauced but wholesome and caloric cheer. I'm glad he lived to see the new day come—and celebrate it, as he himself would say, "Scandaliously!"

W. F. were really his initials, though his enemies (and they were many) claimed that these letters stood for "Wrong Font!" I do not think they often said it to his face, however, or more than once. He

took inordinate pride in the good trade of printer. It was his boast that he had set the first form printed in the Klondike camps, and that was maybe true. He was the man who first discovered Robert Service, then a young clerk with the Canadian Bank of Commerce, and (so he would often tell) handled and launched the first Service manuscript. He always referred to himself as The Old Man, but to the rest of Our Town he was "W. F."

Several times in *Uncle Sam's Attic* I used the phrase, "as W. F. would say;" and many people have asked me "Who is this W. F.?" It's not an easy tale to tell, for like most very stimulating people, he was a compound of most contradictory and paradoxical qualities—a gray-beard, limping, and emaciated Falstaff, with human heights and depths inextricably mixed in him—lovable and loyal to a fault, yet his associates were often arrant scamps and something in him had affinity for all the bad boy ways of social blacklists. Almost always we were arrayed in enemy camps, on nearly every civic question. In abstract matters (so it seemed to me) he had a perfect genius for choosing the wrong side. ("Of course," you say, "for it was not *your* side." I will admit that, being woman!) But, in all matters that came down *ad hominem* to problems of the personal equation or a particular case of human justice, he had an equally inerrant glorious quality of rightness, an instinct sure as homing bird for settling on the kindest human solution. As a logician, I thought him full of holes. As a warm hearted human actor in the drama of Our Town, he had my vast and thoroughgoing interest and respect. And though in those impersonal things we fought in enemy trenches, yet once when I had desperate need of friendliness,

he gave it in a way and with a genuine completeness no other fellow townsman showed. He was that admirable and not so very usual person—outside the vanished age of chivalry—a generous enemy!

W. F. was a quiet voiced man, dry and sparing of speech. When he had been companioned by the great god Bacchus for a time, his tongue was generously set free however, and his pen moved with the sharp edged vigor of an etcher's tool. He gave us editorials that were really brilliant then, witty and with a charm of self-revealingness, even when some of their phrases shocked the soft sensibilities of Our Town's more sober matrons. With trope and with epithet, he wove a verbal cloth of color. Flowing in graphic, terse, strong, gripping, Saxon-rooted English, often rising to heights of real beauty when speaking of his children or his loved Alaska—*his* mistress as she was my own—he would drop into vulgate slang or argot of the dance hall or the gambling house, to clinch a high-flown phrase or punch a point home, with a swift swoop that had the impact of a knock-out. He was a born newspaper man, a born wanderer, and had a born capacity for sensing the community feeling in any matter. He could gather and shape and lead community thought with almost unerring skill. Our Town would take anything from W. F., would forgive him anything. "In Our Town" (that column he wrote best when flamed with proper spirit!) died with him, to the community's real loss.

He told a story once of going back to that section of New York State where his family had originated and were still church pillars. There he was asked to give a talk before the Baptist Sunday School. This sounded hilariously incongruous to his Fairbanks



audience and he said, "The Old Man had to watch his step, believe me, folks. But it was a damned good talk, and the kids ate it up. Old W. F. knows kids!"

W. F. could well have said, with another famous character whom he sometimes resembled, "when I was neither boy nor man but between both, I felt a strong desire of seeing the world." He often said, "I scattered wild rye plenty, in my youth."

"Away back in '82," he told once, to cheer Our Town during a spring snowstorm, "when the world was full of pep and vinegar and all the people said 'where be you,' instead of 'where are you,' as they do now, and we were divorced from the Michigan Military Academy for throwing a bottle at the Commandant's head (it was an empty bottle, and he had caught us taking the last drink from it, and it was all off with us, anyway, and we were feeling foolish and frisky) and we reported back to the Home Office for further sentence, Father sent us west, to 'make a man of me.' West then was Dakota, which had no north and south designations, and to be sure I would be far enough away he sent me to Pembina, which was on the border, just across the Red River of the North from Emerson, Minnesota, and a mile from West Lynne, Manitoba. The morning after we reached there we were awakened by a steamboat whistle and, looking out of the third story window of our hotel we saw a steamboat in the main street, landing the mail in the second story windows of the postoffice, for Pembina that day was the Venice of America, altho more Venetian than the real Venice. So we lingered near watching the flood subside day after day until finally the mud appeared and the dove brot in a piece of sage brush and we decided

to desert the Ark for the broad prairies and our destiny. It was 24 miles to the ranche and every hollow was a coulee with water from inches to feet deep, and there was no trail. Still, they were kind to me. They let me ride an Indian pony—and herd all the cattle and sheep in front of me and compelled me to keep up with the caravan. Did you ever try to drive a herd of sheep and cattle thru water and mud for 24 miles and keep up with the procession? Then there is one trouble you need never know. But we lived thru it, and soon we were caroling gaily behind six oxen and a gang plow, husbandrying 24 furroughs a day, each of them a mile long, and not allowed to ride the plow because the ground was so ‘heavy.’ And, away out there on the broad prairie, on the 24th day of May, 1882, on the Queen’s birthday when we had planned to attend the celebration just across the line in Canada it SNOWED—not a measly little snowstorm like to-day’s but a blizzard, in which you couldn’t see a foot in front of you, and cold as all get out. It was three days before we could get to the barn, and there we found the poor cattle frozen to the ground in their stalls! Talk about ‘can do’ in the snow line; this is nothing.

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“We remember that, our first real camp in the outworld, so plainly because it was near there, on the Hudson Bay Company’s stock ranch ‘Northcotte’ (12,000 acres) where we were cooking for the cowboys after graduating from the ranch thru hitting the owner over the head with a singletree, that we had our first heartache from love. Gee! How it hurt! The Girl Back Home, the first one we ever loved, was told a lie about us, and believed it and

didn't write, and the world was dark indeed. Times were when we thot our heart would ache itself to death, but shortly thereafter the cowboys arose in their might, angered at some little thing about the cooking, and drove us off the reservation, and our cup of sorrow was full—a thousand miles from home, broke, all dressed up and without the price to go anywhere and a million miles between watertanks, and we with a busted heart! Gee! It was fierce!

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“Much water has passed over the wheels of life since then and much grist has been ground. Many hearts have been broken and much snow has fallen thruout the world, but we are living on and the break that was in our heart has healed, and broken again and yet again, and healed a whole lot more than it has broken and we were never happier than we are to-day. We lived to love other Little Girls, of all complexions and colors, and The Girl—she married a redheaded Jew telegraph operator in a little town in Illinoy, is five feet tall and four feet broad and has eight redheaded children.”

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Two years later W. F. burst forth one day with this column, under the simple heading: “Longevity.”

“In Seattle at the University of Washington, the School of Journalism (whatever that is) in its October issue of its monthly magazine prints the following regarding an aged citizen of Our Town: INACCURATE, SAYS THOMPSON. W. F. Thompson, editor and manager of the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, a publisher since 1879, and a pioneer in the Pacific Northwest, takes the Washing-

ton Newspaper to task for some inaccuracies in a bit of newspaper history quoted from the Davenport *Times-Tribune*. He makes it clear he never was owner of *The Lincoln County Times*, but that he was editor, manager, and pressman in 1888-89, coming from 'subbing' on Frank Dallam's four-case handset *Spokane Review* to Davenport for the purpose. Mr. Dallam bought *The Times* from Mrs. F. M. Gray, wife of its founder.

"Besides his Lincoln County experience, Mr. Thompson was concerned in the affairs of some other Washington newspapers. He ran a sporting, society, and dramatic weekly of his own in Tacoma in 'Gambler Harry Morgan's time,' and was editor of the *Morgan Globe*, when Will L. Vischer was editing it. He started the *Des Moines News* in 1901, then *The Steilacoom News*, and put *The Roslyn News* into Roslyn, the first paper published there, and 'had the three of them going at one time—the year Tom Carrol ran for Congress.'

"Mr. Thompson started and ran a daily at Westport-on-the-Sea, the year it opened, and says he organized there the first county press association of the State of Washington. At Sprague, he had *The Independent*, *The Lincoln County Farmer*, and *The Lincoln County Democrat* running at the same time. He made *The Independent* the only daily at Sprague during the A. R. U. Strike.

"He says of several other ventures: 'In 1895 I moved to Trail, B. C., and started *The News*. At one time I ran and controlled *The Trail Creek News* and *The Nelson Miner*, the latter the oldest paper in the West Kootenais.

"'In 1898, in the spring, I established the first paper in the then-North at Glenora, on the Stikine

Trail, printing there before the first paper was printed at Dawson. I travelled the Trail in '98, and came out over the Chilkoot Pass that fall.

"I also formed and promoted *The Dawson Daily News*—sold out the night before the boat was started with it for the North; followed next year and conducted *The Yukon Sun* for years, with Buel as cartoonist; also Renfro in the same line. Service sent his first poems Outside for review, thru *The Sun* office.

"In 1884, I edited and published *The Corsicana Cyclone*, Corsicana, Tex., taking it over from its owner for wages. And, my first publication was *The Howard City Snorter*, Michigan, a school paper, which I edited, published and printed in 1879.'

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## "THE SECRET OF A LONG LIFE.

"The City Editor of the *News-Miner*, hoping almost against hope to live forever and keep on in his chosen profession, upon reading this from the Journalism school, proceeded to interview 'The Ancient' who is now so old and infirm that he scarcely writes any more, at all, at all, unless he feels so inclined. The City Editor asked The Ancient the question:

"To WHAT do you attribute your longevity?' And The Ancient answered:

"To the fact that I have drank, smoked and chewed to excess ALL my life.'

"But it might not act thataway with ANY ONE BUT The Ancient."

W. F.'s wife was younger sister of Countess Carbonneau, famous in Dawson days, and his three children (Marian, Dick and Bill) have recently become heirs to a considerable fortune left them by their paternal grandmother, whose library alone is valued at \$100,000. These children W. F. adored and he was always talking of them, always arranging pleasant treats for all the children of Our Town—parties, surprises, celebrations, “a blowout with trimmings”—raising money for them, condoning Hallowe'en offenses against the peace and order, talking irate property owners out of suits and prosecutions. Boys will be boys, and W. F. was at heart and by kinship a boy himself until the day he died, although he called himself The Ancient! Witness this November 1 half column in the *News-Miner*:

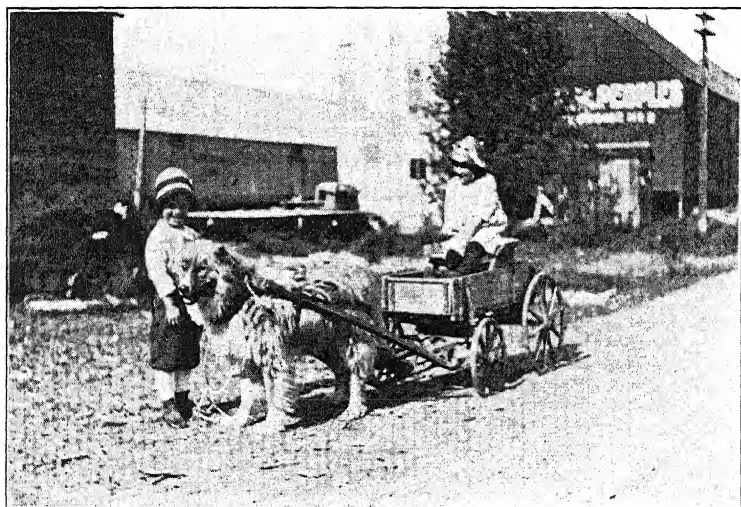
### “BOYVILLE ROSE TO SORROWING THIS MORNING.

“There was no joy in Boyville this morning, which to now has been Boyville's gladdest morning, being the morning after the night before, which is Hallowe'en. Fairbanks boys made their greatest effort last evening. They even succeeded in ringing the school bell, which is an unusual accomplishment. They did all and sundry the old stunts and some new ones never tried before, and according to the rules of the game this morning should have shown them something to be proud of as a result of their last night's disorganization work. Instead, the ol' town looked more orderly and neater than it did yesterday morning.

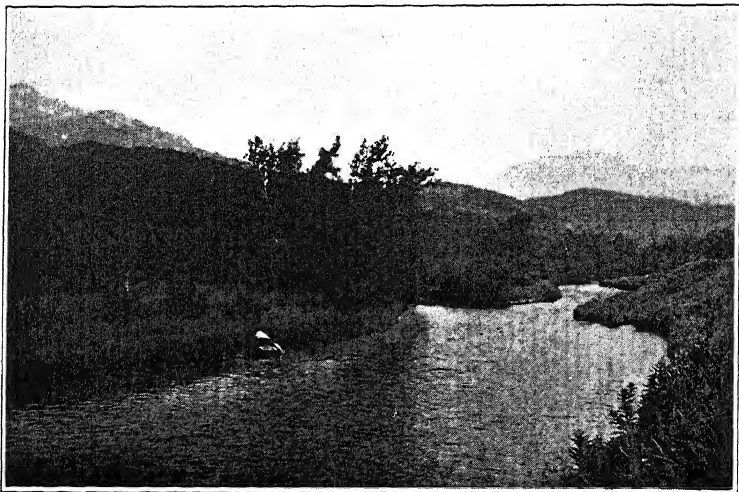
“It was all the fault of the City Council, and to-day every boy in Our Town is hoping that he never



WE WOMEN OF ALASKA ORGANIZED.



W. F. WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN BOYVILLE.



IS IT A DELECTABLE LAND, LIKE THE ALASKA WE BOTH KNOW?



gets old enough to pay taxes here. The Council went to work and put a lot of auto policemen on the job, and they trailed the boys as tho they hadn't nothin' else to do. As fast as the boys would pull off a disorganization stunt and get away undetected, right behind them would come a town 'bull' and undo all the work the boys had done. The result was that this morning everything was neater and more orderly in Our Town than it was the morning or the week before—greatly to the disheartening of the noble band of cheerful workers of Boyville who only do any real hard work on Hallowe'en."

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In Our Town we can't enjoy fireworks on July 4, for there is no night then and we could not see them. We can't enjoy them New Year's Eve, for it is apt to be too frosty for standing out of doors to watch a celebration. Yet everybody loves fireworks, and so W. F. conceived the brilliant notion of celebrating Hallowe'en with them—an ideal time, for nights are long enough for pleasant darkness and the air just cool enough for comfort. So he wrote:

"Is there anybody in Our Town who remembers how they used to handle fireworks in the days when fireworks were and there was some joy in life? If there is such a man in Our Town, a man who had a youth and the fullness thereof, and who still has a remembrance of those grand old days, and can remember how a pinwheel should be nailed to the board so that it will spin when set off; can remember how rockets are slanted and made secure for the takeoff so that they won't kick back and hurt a tad; can remember how 'set' pieces were set for effective work, 'neverthing, we hope he will come to the

*News-Miner* office and distinguish the fact, or confess, for on Hallowe'en the children of Our Town are going to see the Fireworks.

"There's no place for fireworks on the list of events of a Northern Fourth of July, more's the pity, and for that there are boys and girls in Our Town who are nearly old enough to vote and who have never seen the fireworks. That's no good condition of affairs, and the tho't is abhorrent to the *News-Miner*. For that, and for the education of our own children, we have arranged for a fireworks display on a small order for Hallowe'en. The fireworks are here, and ready to work. But, the management of this paper is so blamed old and has forgotten so much that he knew in youth that he doesn't know how to put the fireworks to work and needs help on that end of the celebration."

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But old Sourdoughs with long memories rallied nobly to the call, and on the day after the celebration, W. F. was writing again in his Our Town column:

"After all these years in Fairbanks, rubbing up against everybody all the time, being here since the day the Mastodon used to spoil the apple trees which grew the ripe, juicy red apples which made the Valley of the Tanana famous, the people of Our Town do not fool us muchly, any time, any place. They do not evidence a hard game—just the ordinary town stuff, when you get to know; and you needn't tell us now that the Oldtimers here and the Younger Generation do not love 'The Fireworks,' for WE know better!"

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W. F. had a remarkable capacity for friendship,

for enthusiasm, for loyalty, and faith alike in people whom he knew, the town he lived in, and the Alaska which he loved. He could be utter kindness at times, and fellow-feeling was his middle cognomen. I miss him, now he's gone. We all do. You knew where you could find him, and as antagonist he was a swordsman to be proud of! One of the very nicest compliments I ever had, came from him. It's true he said it (as he wrote best) when he was very literally "not quite himself"; but then, you know, "*in vino veritas.*"

Yesterday I was speaking of W. F. with one of our Alaska Bishops (we have four whom I know, so that's sufficiently indefinite—for this was not said *ex cathedra!*). Now Bishops are supposed to be in league with the doorkeeper of High Heaven, I am told—for I myself do not belong to an episcopal communion. But my understanding is that they have special power to bind and seal credentials of salvation. This dear Right Reverend friend and father said to me: "If you say any word of W. F., speak well of him, I beg of you. I do not say this because of any *nil nisi bonum* consideration, but because I myself loved the man. I could not help it! I'd say the same thing were he living still—and so would you, my child, I know. He had his faults. We all have. And his were numerous enough, and we all knew them. He flaunted them. But—well, he was a man."

I hope Saint Peter heard his vicar upon earth give this unasked-for testimony!

W. F. never indulged in gossip of the mean sort. If he had anything he wanted to say, he came out definite and strong and said it with no round-about or weasel words. No one had ever any doubt as to

his attitude, when he was through! He was never catty. If he had it in for any one, as he often had, he hit hard with all his might, called proper and improper names, stated facts, dates, places. He never beat about the bush, never indulged in sly insinuating.

And he had the true newsman's true sense of the psychological value of news. During those awful days of the great flu epidemic in our camp, before the railroad came and when there was no possibility of outside help—when nine hundred of our thousand men were suddenly stricken down with plague—he kept on publishing his paper almost single handed, filling it full of bright and cheery stuff. No whisper of a panic, no thought that we would not pull through by our own strength and boot-strap tug! But no issue of those first "flu papers" was ever sent Outside, for he was much too proud of Our Town's fair good name to let the world know how we suffered. Months afterward, this self-explanatory column appeared under his "In Our Town."

"Tom Riggs, our August Governor and our Washington and Foreign Representative in September, etc., has a new secretary, and we don't know him, and he hasn't been introduced to us, which makes it bad all around. Both of us are losers by that, so he tried to remedy the omission by sending us a form letter, with a lot of printed matter on it and dotted lines to sign on and some penciled notations. The sum and substance of his come-on First Epistle to this Ephesian was that the Horticultural Museum at Juneau was short those perfectly-good issues of this Old Home Paper which are designated as 'Nos. 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, and 218.' Every hair in the head of our newspaper children is numbered, but we don't

know any of them by the number, so you can see what this New Chum's frontal attack did to us, if it did. However, so many consecutive numbers being missing we knew just when those numbers were printed. The secretary is right. He didn't get them. Neither did any subscriber outside the city limits of Fairbanks. They were the flu-time papers, and we were not circulating any stories of weakness of Our Town at that time. But, to be courteous, we wrote him as follows and sent it in an official envelope, using the same paper he made his request on and the envelope he enclosed, for it thus cost us nothing for paper or postage and created this story:

“ ‘Them dates was Flu-Blossom-Time in Fairbanksville, when we were printing without printers, pressmen or paper, and we haven't even files for ourselves. You can save a goodly part of your young life by NEVER writing us for ‘missing’ numbers of this Great Family Journal, for we make a specialty of not dealing in them. We mail your paper every day; the Government takes them in at its office here and is paid for packing them to you; YOU are the whole thing in Government in Alaska, as we see it from here; them as has must lose if they don't play square; if the mails throw you down in the matter of your Old Home Paper, write Burleson about it and you MAY get action, but you certainly are not liable to from US. See? ’

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“The only reason they take this paper, anyway, is because they want to learn at Juneau what we say about them, so why should WE worry.

"Yesterday we explained to you why it was that there was so little news in that issue—we had been instructed by telephone from Nenána to print nothing until we heard from Mr. Heimburger. We heard from him last night, but we are in a greater quandary as to when and what to not print than we were before, per follows:

"He writes us that his wife is in the act of suing him for divorce, and of also sending the summons to this Old Home Town Paper for publication; that the divorce as an abstract proposition is all right with him, and that he signed the necessary papers on the dotted line of his own free will and accord, and would be the last man in the world to take it back, but, as a CONCRETE proposition he wants us to hold out on the publication until his wife kicks in with the money she promised him if he would step out of the way and permit her to get clearance papers from that homeport. He wants us to help him make her come thru, by refusing to print the legal advertisement until he gets the coin. Wouldn't that quandary you?

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"So, we are up against it again, and guessing. But our first guess is that if some reputable lawyer comes into this office or writes and hands us a legal advertisement to be published in this paper so many times at so much per we will probably take the money and print the ad, and let the poor wronged husband work his own graft."

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Many of the best local stories about our W. F. are of such a delectable Rabelaisian flavor that, I fear,

my Boston publisher—with the Watch and Ward looking eagerly over his shoulder for just such stuff!—would hesitate to print them. Some people have a way of gathering such stories to them. I have a hunch that half the tales I've heard my fellow townsmen tell on W. F., really happened elsewhere and to some one else. But he so fitted such acidic yarns, they fitted him. Biting, caustic and bitter when he fought, he made innumerable rankling enemies who loved to spread unholy gospel with his name tacked to it. One group of ex-Alaskans were his special target and these he fought with body blows, delivered both above and under belts. He thought them all self-seekers and men who used Alaska's name merely to sharpen their own private axes; so in his speech about them he was unremittingly pouring vitriol in reference to what he called "this unholy chorus," and he could snap a word across a man's face so that it raised a welt.

In the earliest days of Our Town, leading citizens built a narrow gauge railroad from the river out to the gold-bearing creeks; and it seems to me that the old Tánana Valley Railroad should be remembered, now that it has been done to death, as inspiration for one of the best W. F. stories, if for nothing else. When the late Franklin K. Lane was Secretary of the Interior, this "dinky" railroad proved a thorn in the side of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Whatever regulations the Commission made could apply to every railroad in America except the T. V. R.—because our forty-five mile "dinky" could boast little that gave it any semblance of a properly constituted "public utility," although in its first year it carried 10,000 tons of freight and 50,000 passengers.

There was an I. C. C. regulation calling for the carriage of dynamite ten cars behind the engine. For violation of this rule, and because prospectors *would* carry a pack-sack full of powder on the two passenger coaches, the road's fines soon amounted to approximately \$2,000,000!

The United States marshal was appealed to, to enforce the regulation; but when marshal after marshal had to be sent Outside with an escort, due to mental anguish induced by trying to solve this problem, the matter finally was passed up to "The Old Man." W. F. and Secretary Lane had been newspaper pals in Tacoma, so he wrote Lane and informed him that the ten-car regulation, if enforced here, might be fraught with serious consequences.

W. F. pointed out that the road possessed only six coaches and box cars *combined!* To hook a carload of powder on a *four-car length of cable and tow it behind*, would be an undertaking to balk even a boomer railroader! "Suppose," asked W. F., "some one forgot to set the brakes going down hill, and the carload of dynamite bumped the string ahead? The entire assets of the railroad, including many of its regular patrons, would travel to kingdom come!"

When W. F. had finished describing the Tánana Valley road, Secretary Lane went over to the Interstate Commerce Commission, read the correspondence, and issued an order as follows: "Run your damned railroad to suit yourself, but remember we have our eye on you!"

W. F. was an inveterate poker player and had not only the inbred gambling spirit of all sourdough Alaskans, but your true poker face. Once he and I played poker, with the good name of the Red Cross at stake! It's a curious story and I hesitate to tell it



because it may surprise and shock some of my fellow townfolk. But all this happened long ago, and "now it can be told."

During the World War I was put in charge of Red Cross publicity here, no doubt because I had served several years as an AP reporter. The women of our section had never organized before in any national cause, and as the very quality of the country was individualism run riot, organization was a real task. And who was I—who was *any* person here, an equal among equals—to tell Alaskans what to do or how to do it? Yet the American Red Cross had many hide-bound rules; and if we were to make our energies effective, our work of any use at all, we had to knit our socks and cut our garments according to the patterns laid out for us or they were not acceptable. I knew this, but converting others to it proved impossible. They simply looked me in the eye and said, "I knitted socks before you were born. I learned to knit in the Old Country. My man has worn my socks, knit this way, ever since he came North. I guess what's good enough for him is good enough for you, or the Red Cross."—And that was that!

If my word was worth nothing (and I soon realized that it was worth exactly that) whose word would they take? There was but one answer—"W. F." But I could not just see myself inducing gnarled old W. F. to start a Red Cross knitting circle! I lost some sleep over this matter, and then evolved a plan. I had been very interested in W. F.'s unique newspaper style, since I had first come to Alaska. I took down all the old files of the *News-Miner*, and I spent a week studying his editorials, as though I were boning up for a college examination. I studied

him as I had once been told to study my Pater, Lamb or Addison! Then I sat down and, putting myself as nearly as I could inside of W. F.'s skin—in spirit, picking up *his* pen and sitting in *his* office—I wrote a series of five editorials about the Red Cross needs and aims, more W. F. than W. F. himself!

With prayer upon my lips, and quaking knees, I took my neatly typewritten sheets to the *News-Miner* office, not going in until I saw him through the window sitting there at his desk. Trying my best to slip a mask across my face, to match his own expressionless one, I handed him my copy. I had no idea how he would take this. I knew of course that he would see through my trick in a flash. Would he resent it, and “bawl me out” with all the vigor of his damning pen? I did not know. I merely said, with a grave face and not the slightest flicker of humor: “Red Cross copy, Mr. Editor.”

The next night I opened my *News-Miner* with cold hands. There, under Editorial headline, was my first piece of copy—word for word as I had written it! This went on for five days. The next week, at a bridge party given for the aid of our French Orphans, the women were agog and all enthusiastic over W. F.'s proposals and suggestions. “We must do so-and-so,” they said. “There is no other way. You can see that. W. F. says ——”

We had no further word of trouble, our organization schemes slid on greased skids. We bought and knitted up our literal tons of wool and were, I think, the most harmonious Red Cross Chapter of all war-time history! When I met W. F. afterward upon the street, he never once waved an eyelash of amusement or of comment; and I, though bubbling with giggles, followed his cue and never varied from our

usual coldly formal greeting. Yet by his quick sense he had solved our entire problem for us.

I've often wondered what went on inside that wise gray head of his, behind those keenly quiet gray eyes and bushy brows, when he had read my brash W. F.-ish copy! Did he blaze up in anger first and curse my copy-catting—then simmer down to sense the need that drove me to the ruse? Or did he chuckle to himself as he turned page to page, and comment to the empty editorial sanctum: "Well, she may be a fool, but anyway she is a newspaper woman." If he said that, then all was well between us; for his pride in his profession and his trade was master craftsman's pride. The first and only President of these United States to come to Alaska was greeted by W. F. as Editor Harding, and was presented with a golden *printer's* rule!

W. F.'s headlines were often shocking but they tickled one's fancy, even the most finical. Time and again I've sworn to stop his paper, but never did. Always I was curious, as we all were, to see "What W. F. will say about it!" The *News-Miner* seems sadly drab since he has left Our Town—left it after a too hearty New Year celebration, which was exactly the trail he would himself have chosen, I believe. How he would have hated any lingering illness, death bed scenes and sentimental gushing!

On February 15, 1918, W. F. wrote this editorial, which I'll quote in part, showing how he loved to shock—and yet I think he was deeply religious at heart:

### "NOT WITH CHRIST!

"The Associated Press writers tell a story in the *Citizen* this morning which is not unbelievable to

those who think they understand the point of view of the paranoical Kaiser. It is the story of a friend of an American minister who had a talk with the Kaiser before the war was started, in which talk referring to the belief that the 'second coming of Christ,' was at hand the Kaiser said: 'Oh, no; that will never do at all; it would interfere with MY plans.' Anything that is in opposition to the Kaiser will 'never do,' even though it comes from the Deity.

"We have always believed in the 'second coming,' for if Christ could so mysteriously appear He can certainly 'come back,' in His own good time and to some purpose; but we do not believe that He would 'come back' to the Kaiser's land in the life of the Kaiser, unless He had an unalterable and Simon-pure safe-conduct from the Father, for He 'knows all, sees all,' and He knows the Kaiser and the tricks and the manners of the Kaiser's own people. If Christ should 'come back' now and land in the Kaiser's land, unless He 'put in with' the Kaiser and played the game just as the Kaiser dictated, what would happen to Him would make the crucifixion look like a love feast for the Prodigal Son."

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W. F. had a way of picking up the local or national news, which tickled Our Town's fancy. He knew his crowd, he knew that though he might shock or startle, we would come back for more. He was a tonic—we *needed* W. F.! A news item on free speech is headed "Protection for Jawsmiths." A story about Kaiser Wilhelm is entitled "Former Emp on a Bust." The opening of a local church is called "Episcopalians on the Map." A hanging is

entitled "Jerked to Jesus," the death of a candy magnate's daughter is told under the caption "Lost his Little Chocolate Drop," and the passing of a not too savory old-timer brought this headline, "There Are Others Long Overdue." W. F. kept no list of "sacred cows" in his office, as must many a city editor. He was no respecter of persons, and when he sat himself down to write up news, gloves were taken off and brass knuckles were sometimes put on, if the occasion seemed to call for action!

In those past winter days when mail came slowly and painfully and most uncertainly over the long trail, before the railroad was built, W. F. wrote:

"The long awaited mail from Chitina was a disappointment, containing six sacks of government envelopes and Victory Loan dope and one sack of Literary Digests, which are now being digested. The *News-Miner* received an order for advertising Cascara, \$10 worth per month, payment to be made in Cascarets—and no man can live by Cascarets alone!"

He could pick up a scrap of local news, and play tricks with it that made us think it really interesting:

### "CONNECTED WITH THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

"*Fairbanks in its first real sewer has the longest continuous line in the world.* Leading in all things huge, gigantic, tall, lengthy and comprehensive, Fairbanks now or by the week-end will have the longest delivery sewer system in the northern world.

"Starting from 11th or 12th avenues, Fairbanks, it extends down Cushman street to Chena Slough, there making water connections with the mighty

Yukon river and the Pacific Ocean, and all the integral parts of the great sewage system that is ours will have to be paid for by our citizens only on that part of the system extending the 11 or 12 short blocks to the slough—the remainder of the distance and the upkeep thereof being arranged for by the waters themselves.

“Ain’t God good to Fairbanks!”

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“To-day the improving of Garden Island proceeds apace, with the modern covering the ancient and the Island taking on new and strange form. ‘Hurry-Up’ Jones drops in every day or so and hurries them up a lot. The painters follow the carpenters so closely that they have half a shingle painted before the last nail is driven in that shingle. Thursday a hurry-up painter hurried too fast, the shingle slipped, the painter slipped, the paint slipped, in an instant the painter was painted ‘neat but not gaudy.’ The slowerfalling paint caught the swifter falling painter as he caught on the scaffolding below him; the can of paint hit the painter in the back of the neck and oozed down his back between his shirt and his bareskin, tinting him a rich green, some of which is on him yet, in spite of all his scrubbing, as there are places on him he cannot reach. The building needed the paint, and the painter’s body didn’t, but there it is—and his coat of green enamel didn’t cost him a cent to acquire.”

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“The *News-Miner* desires herewith to serve notice upon all and sundry the joyriders of Our Town that this here printin’ office ain’t no gasoline supply depot.

"Early this spring the boys who got caught out at night short of gasoline used to come in here and borrow a can, and return it next day. Now it has grown so that somebody comes in when nobody is here, borrows a can of gasoline and never returns it. That happened Saturday or Sunday night, and we don't want it to happen again.

"If we can't afford to own a 'nautomobile, we certainly can't afford to furnish free gas for those who own a car alone. That's logic, too, and we have so notified the police chief. Anybody seen packing a can of gasoline out of this office in future is apt to hear something drop."

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### "IN OUR TOWN.

"We see by the papers that the title of the new Dawn picture which is now in the making in Alaska is 'Passions of the Frost.' That must be something new under the sun, if there is anything new thataway. We also note that the actors in this Passion Play are doing their frosty best in July and August in Alaska, and will develop and complete their 'Frosty Passions' in Hollywood, *California*, when the frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder is in shock in Our Town. Then, in the '*Alaskan*,' Curwood paints the Countess Carbonneau as throwing her last dollar in the Yukon at Dawson, raising her ante from two bits to a dollar by the stroke of the easy pen, and John Kelly tells on his return from Dawson that all this season tourists there have been requesting their landlords to take them down where rolls the mighty Yukon *and show them the exact spot in the water where our sister-in-law deposited a white quarter in*

the days when a quarter wouldn't buy a postage stamp in Dawson. Then comes Wallace Marple, Presbyterian pal of ours at Anchorage, and sends us a Biblical postcard with a lot of questions on it for us to answer, among them being one which questions:

*"Where did Jacob offer Isaac?"*

*"What did Jake offer Ike,"* we could understand, but WHERE—what difference could THAT make? We are earnestly striving to be an understanding, obliging and kindly old man, but there must be a lot of things we do not understand, such as 'Passions of the Frost,' and 'Where did one jew make an offer of another jew.'"

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After the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect, if W. F. came out with a peculiarly daring editorial Our Town would say, "W. F. has found another cache!" He gave us frequent editorials on the Seven Deadly Sins, with footnotes to his own experience as example and reference. He was no saint—and appeared glad of it. By his own boast, he was indeed as great a sinner as any in our camp. At that, he was a better man than many who pretended much. He held the tolerant and—on the whole—aristocratic attitude and tradition toward vices such as gambling, speakeasies and dope-ways. I did not agree with him, perhaps because of my Scotch forebears and some New England leanings; but I could see he held his attitude consistently and honestly. Any appeal to fair play usually found him lined up on the right side. And once, when he had been gnashing his teeth in print, he closed a slashing and daredevil piece with the comment: "But the wages of sin ain't been reduced much, to speak of."



W. F. was not my friend, and yet I liked him. I never talked with him a dozen times, and yet I strongly felt his influence—we all did. He was lined upon the opposite side of almost every social or political question, yet I believed sincerely in his sincerity and trusted his right-heartedness. It may be that down underneath we knew that, while our townsfolk friends were seldom mutual, we had one very dear and cherished friend in common of whom we thought the same leal thoughts: our adopted country of Alaska, to whom we were both jealously devoted. That was our one real bond and neither of us could speak too well of her, in the other's estimation.

I wish he could come back and write some copy for us about the new camp where he's gone. I'd like to know "what W. F. will say about it." Old Printer that he was and always will be, I'm sure he keeps in touch with all Alaskan news, whatever other-worldly pavement knows the drag of his lame foot to-day. I'm sure his heart warms to all true Alaskan stories and that he's burdened and indignant whenever lies are told of her, whenever a congressional or other voice is raised to her detraction.

—I greet you, friendly enemy, should your eye fall upon this page. I wish you well in your new venture. I hope the folk you'll find, where you have gone, appreciate as they are said to do those who have loved their fellow men above all other things on earth. Then, in that new land o'er the hill, I know you will indeed have signal honor.

You said once, "We are ready to-night to learn any new game that Death has to hand us; and from the experience we have had and expect to have while we are with life, any change that comes ought to be interesting."—Is Death truly a pleasant country,

then? Has it been overrated, like so many camps of promise unfulfilled we know about? Or is it such a land as we both love, where one may know adventure and wide friendship to infinity?

Give us "the low down," W. F., as you so often have. We shall believe your write-up. When dark days come and winter gathers close, we miss your paper thudding on the porch of nights. Once more, we long to know "What does W. F. think about it?"



## LAST HOME OF THE SUN

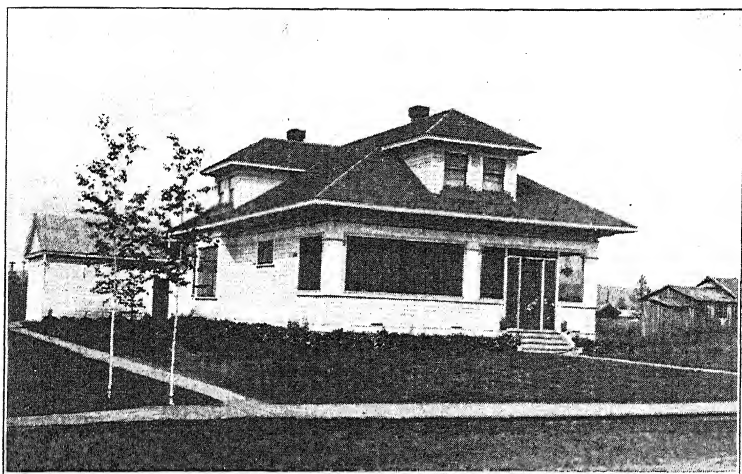
OUR first Alaskan home was a log cabin on the River, very picturesque but very hard to heat in winter. After two years there we had bought and completed a frame bungalow that had stanch double walls filled in between with several inches of sawdust, to make it warm in winter and cool in summer. This was really a charming cottage, gray painted, green roofed, with wide and spacious porch, window-boxes of bright blossoms, hanging baskets with flowing vines in them. The house was set back restfully from the street in a lawn of smooth-clipped grass that was our own particular pride, for lawns were a true luxury and a daring experiment in this land of moss and under-frozen soil.

We loved it, for we ourselves had worked so hard to make it a place of year-around good living. We had brought to it many an heirloom from older homes in eastern states, just as our forebears in their day had brought their cherished chests and chairs and tables with them from older homes in Ayrshire, Lincolnshire and Devon—a pledge to the past and a token of future faith. With our own hands we built a hearth, the first open fireplace in our part of the country and a curiosity to many. On either side of that fireplace and topped by one long slab of oak that stretched across the whole room-side, we ourselves built open oaken bookcases and filled them with our friendly treasures. Our polished floor of oak was also a curiosity to many in the town—but a

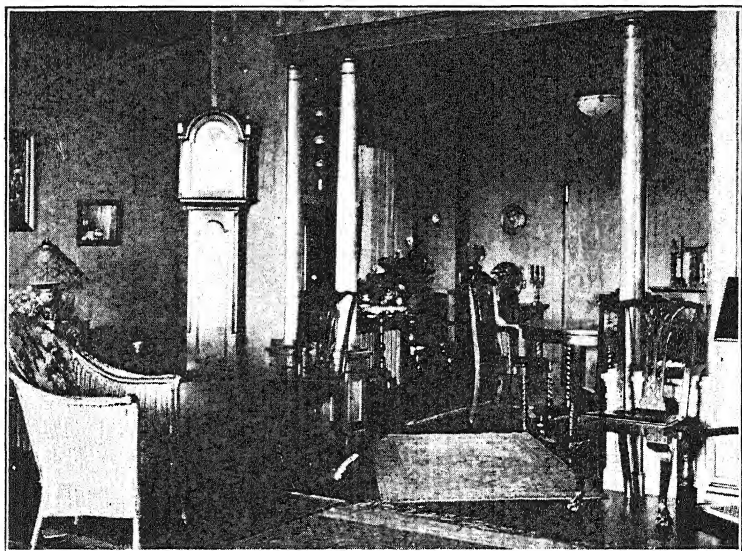
joy to the housekeeper, I can promise you, as was also our built-in vacuum cleaner which sucked all dust down into a fireproof bin in our spacious cellar. In that cellar my husband had built in one corner a complete carpenter's shop, for doing odd jobs; in another corner he had made a dark room with running water and devices for developing, printing and enlarging photographs; while in the farthest corner from the furnace was a cold cellar for preserves and vegetables, and next the furnace was our coal-bin—for, since my partner is an engineer, we were the first family in Our Town to "switch" from native and expensive wood to native and cheap coal. The house was equipped with every electrical device we could have to make our living easy and less complicated and so save our time and energy for other more important things, even as you yourself equip your house.

That was the picture as I saw it, sitting one summer morning on my Liberty-cretonne and wicker-furnished porch, shaded by vines and drawn green slatted sun-blinds, through which the drenching light came in soft pin-stripe ribbands. But I noticed two strangers coming up my walk, tourists from the Yukon boat just docked. They came straight up the steps and, without even knocking at the screen, walked in, stood there, and looked about. They spoke no word to me though I had risen, rather gasping and amazed, at their flat rudeness. I thought at first they might be people from the East coming with letters from our friends and kinsmen there, as often happened. But I did not exist for these two women, it was quite evident.

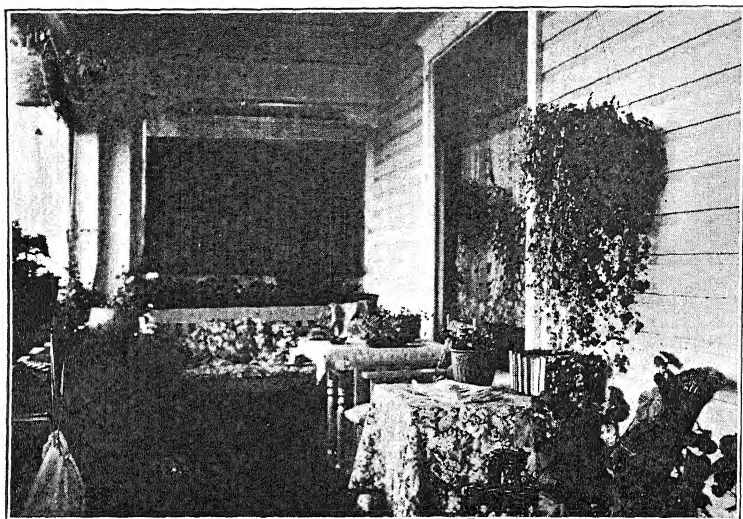
"Humph," sniffed one at last.—"You'd *almost* think *white* people lived here, wouldn't you?"



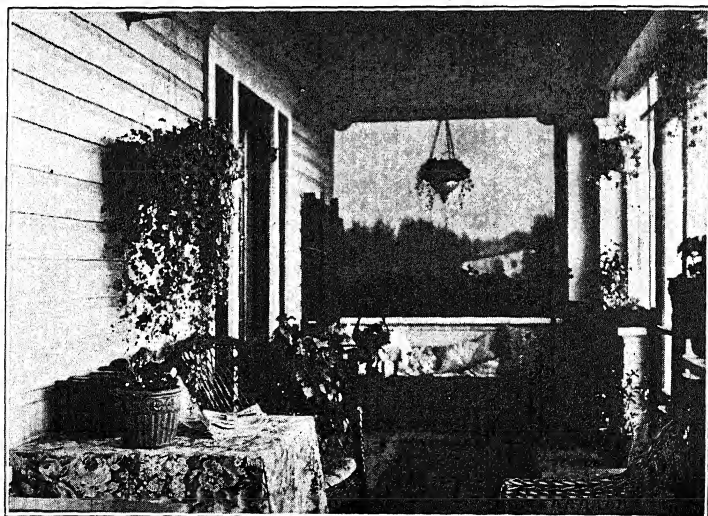
"A GREEN ROOFED COTTAGE, SET IN A LAWN OF SMOOTH-CLIPPED GRASS."



"WE BROUGHT TO IT MANY AN HEIRLOOM."



"MY PORCH, SHADED BY VINES AND SLATTED SUN-BLINDS."



"A PLACE OF YEAR-ROUND GOOD LIVING."

"Yes," I said, coming forward now and trying to put back on, in spite of my plain linen house frock, the social-armor manner I had once seen worn in Washington, those times I poured at White House teas there. "Yes—the *Native* village is twelve miles below, at Chena. You must go there, at once. I am sure you will feel more at home there."

Catty? Absolutely. But what would you? There should be certain decencies observed even if they thought themselves dealing with "Natives." After I had closed (and very audibly locked!) the screen door on their stiffened backs, I tried to calm my ruffled and indignant soul. Why had they acted with such inexcusable rudeness? Of course, the length of Yukon they had come, they had been seeing from their boat the little Indian villages and I suppose they thought that Fairbanks was one, too. They had merely stopped at the first "typical" "Native" house they saw, and walked in. Why not? Anglo-Saxon superior assumption of the rights of a dominant race? Perhaps. But much more subtly, much more sadly, an index of their own lost time in travel. I have regretted since, that in place of losing my temper and brusquely showing them the door, I had not asked them in, set them down in two of my big wicker chairs, offered them high glasses of my best Vienna iced-spiced-chocolate with a float of frothy cream on top—and then reasoned with them, gently!

I wish that I had made them see how, if they went on as they had been doing, all their investment in this trip out to America's last frontier was just a waste of time and money and effort. Supposedly they came to see a new part of America; but if they saw our land here *merely* as another Indian Territory and did not realize that homes, such as the one

they had that morning invaded, were really the contemporary colonial dwellings of people who belonged to their own race—then it were better they had never left the beaten trails but stayed at home and read Jack London by their own comfy firesides! They shouldn't be allowed to come on pilgrimage unless they had the true mind and the heart of pilgrims, open to real vision.

Sometimes I think that there should be a stern interrogator stationed at the borders of Alaska, to catechize each would-be comer North. He should ask every applicant for passage: "Are you politically minded?" In the broad sense of the word, of course, not party politics—a small and too restricted meaning for a fine old word—but politics in the good deep sense of "bearing on the common weal." One may be friendly or opposed to what is happening here now. That, in a sense, is immaterial. Like an equation in quadratics, many an Alaskan problem has two possible answers, one positive and the other negative. But he who comes should know there *is* a problem, should have some understanding of the values of its factors, some interest in there *being* a solution. Surely it is vital that a traveller should know, even though superficially, that there is now a new and valuable experiment of our own colonizing race being tested out here. And here—as elsewhere—the more that one can bring in gift of open mind, the more the land and people of it will give back in gift of understanding.

If I had told them that and they had listened (which isn't one bit likely!), as they rose to go I should have added that, had their present hostess been indeed a Native instead of a colonial daughter, then their unthinking action would have been even



more serious. For our Alaska Natives are a proud people, full of their own ideas of ceremony and given to much courtesy and formality. "Face" means even more to them than it does to us.

—But I lost this good opportunity for fruitful speech, in losing of my temper. One often does! Instead, I carry with me still a prejudice against mere tourism.

There is a reason why the Native Village is "twelve miles below." The incorporated towns of Alaska, in almost every case, are white men's towns. Most Indians are not true townsmen in our meaning; and such settlements as they have made are practically all apart, for their mode of life is a mode apart. It was so in New England in the seventeenth century and it is so in Alaska to-day. There as here, after the first few years of conquest, the influence of the Indian upon the white settler is almost nil. So are his numbers, when the vastness of the country is considered.

Then there is that lofty Saxon attitude of racial superiority—which I confess that I, who have had close dear Indian friends, am quite unable to understand. An educated woman of great charm and truly noble character, lived many years in an Indian settlement on one of our Alaskan rivers. She always came to see me when she visited Fairbanks, and later she brought her family here to live. I once said to her, "What wonderful material your children have for their school work here! So few have really lived *with* the Natives, but your children have had such unusual opportunities to get first hand knowledge of their life and way. Their school themes must be a joy to their teachers. I wish they'd let me read them. It would be a rare treat to me."

"Really, Mrs. Davis," she said, "the Indians do not interest the children. Nor do I think the children have been asked to write anything for school work, about their life on the River."

This was an amazing revelation to me and a state of mind I simply cannot comprehend. Here were children raised since babyhood amongst an alien and peculiar people, and they simply do not find them interesting! Here were school-teachers with an opportunity to explore a mine of ethnologic treasure, unusual even in our strangely peopled country. And no teacher had suggested to these youngsters the unsuspected treasury of personal experience which was theirs to share and tell. Nor was this an isolated example. A trader for years amongst the Indians, to whom I put a question about the meaning of a certain Tinnéh root common in many of their words, replied: "I'm sorry, but I cannot tell you. You see, I have made no effort to learn any Indian tongue. I pay no attention to their talk. If they want to do business with me, they have to talk *my* talk." I thought that attitude a strange one, too—until I remembered that this was the very mental slant of my own ancestors in Massachusetts and Virginia! "Let them come to *us*. We do them a favor just by being here. What a privilege for these savages, just to see us and our superior ways!"

I wonder and I am still wondering. But the more I see and wonder, the more I entertain grave doubts.

That's why, perhaps, the friendship of one very vigorous old Indian woman in Fairbanks has meant so much to me and why I want to tell you something of her. You will guess best the nature of our friendship when I tell you that, almost from the first day I met her, she has been "Grandma" to me. I have

no friend in the wide world to whose quality the great word "character" can be more truly or more genuinely applied. She is a person of real character—forceful, humorous, kindly, understanding, and with the rarest surest gift for getting at the truth of men and things, I've ever known.

Grandma's surface is deceptive. She is a rather shapeless, dumpy, drawn-up little woman—how old I do not know and don't believe that she does, either. She lacks carriage, her gestures lack "art form," but she has powers of heart and will that energize her like a dynamo! Eyes of an agate-like brightness shine in a face charged with memories of keen living. It is a gross mistake to think that Indian women soon age and die an early death. Grandma is great-grandmother to I don't know how many little half-bronze children, and is to-day more bright and wise than most people of my acquaintance here or elsewhere, is full of sharpest wit and shrewdest sense. Gray hair is not a common thing with them, almost never have I seen a white head, and I have known but one really bald Indian. He was a Medicine Man—but whether he was bald because he had a shaman's care, or was a shaman because of his unusual baldness, I confess that I don't know. But I do know that, in all the years Grandma and I have been close friends, I have found myself humbly inferior to her in simple human understanding—in spite of universities and travel and courses in psychology with eminent professors, and in spite too of my being able to read and write!

Indeed, my experience with Grandma has made me very skeptical of the value of the three R's. Wouldn't it make *you* skeptical? For here am I, who have spent a good part of a lifetime with my

nose inside a book, outguessed at every turn in sound judgment of persons, what they will do and why, by this adorably keen old Native woman. She has an infinitely better memory than I have, though she is surely more than twice my age. Russian peasants say of reading, "It puts out the memory." I wonder—is that really true? Reading is theoretically supposed, I know, to sharpen and to stimulate thought. Perhaps it does, when one reads only with improving thought in mind. Otherwise, if one reads just to pass the time, then time is surely wasted by it; and Grandma has not wasted any time of all her many years. Hers is a vivid vital mind, not cluttered up with tags of second-hand learning but keenly clairvoyant—a mind, what's more, wholly *her own*. No printed words have dulled its sharpness as a tool for thought, but it has rubbed the whirring stone of actual people, factual things, for polish and for edge. I'd hate to confess how often I have gone to her for an opinion on some local person when choosing some committee, forming some course of action. I'd take her judgment (expressed merely by an eyelash flicker or a twist of mouth, perhaps, yet quite enough!) above the reasoned sage opinions of Our Town's best citizens, for I have found her knowledge of people and their motives above suspicion or failure. Silent and wondering before that ancient inarticulate wisdom, I have thought, "How much better it is to be a reader of men than a reader of books!"

Grandma's people are of "The Lower River," from near Nulato on the Yukon. They are not of the Eskimo nor are they of the Thlingit or the Haida of the Southeast Coast, but Tinneh—the most typical northern members of that great Athapascan family which form the most widely distributed of all Indian

language-groups. The Tinneh of our Alaskan Interior are distant cousins to such far-away people as the Chippewa, the Navajo and the Apache, I have heard learned Indian scholars say.

These Athapascans are far wanderers and have a way of making themselves at home in many different climates and places. One family chose the redwood region—four hundred miles of Pacific divide from Oregon south to California. Another chose Arizona and New Mexico and parts of Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Texas and Northern Mexico, while our northern branch spread into Alberta and up through the Yukon valley into Interior Alaska, following the great north flow of rivers. So their birch canoes touch the skin boats of Eskimos above the Circle and their myths resemble those of Eskimos, in many ways.

Not only does this friend of mine come from a very travelled and adaptable race (and some one has defined civilization, you know, as the capacity for close adaptation to environment!) but she had the advantage of being born at one of the veritable cross-roads of our North. Nulato is to-day only a small part of the original place-name of her home town, just as Los Angeles is only tag end vestige of the original Spanish name for that place. The full Indian name for Nulato is quite as long and intricate as was *Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Riena de los Angeles*, but it means "The-place-where-we-are-knotted-together." It was here that all the tribes of River Indians met on the Yukona or "Main River," and Kobuk Eskimos came over to Nulato for potlatch and trade. It was a place for early Russian posts—Malakof in 1838, Zagoskin in 1842—and one of Grandma's grandfathers had been Russian.

Nulato is to-day a curious little village near the inflow of the twisty Koyukuk. I remember it best for a most ancient burial ground upon a nearby hill-top—really a little village in itself of miniature houses painted blue and yellow, with glass windows curtained neatly, and filled with bits of food and furniture and other comforts for the spirits of the departed, all overhung with hunting knives and household tools. Strange homemade American flags are spread to flutter there, of reds and blues exotic in their shade and evidently chosen by some Betsey Ross with Slavic blood in her. These flags flaunt various-numbered bars, and odd-assorted star size on a field of livid and electric blue!

But like other women of our High North, where colonists leave grandparents behind and stand now squarely in their own sturdy shoe-pacs, Grandma will not be apt to tell you of that Russian past. She only told me of it once, and that was to put me in my place for imagining that I—chit of a child that *I* am!—could show her something that she did not understand. It was a most complete and courteous reproof.

We had just moved into our new house and I had urged Grandma to come and spend the afternoon with me, for I knew there were many things in it which she had never seen before and would find interesting. Then, too, I had been so busy settling in my new quarters, I had not seen her for several weeks and hungered for a real visit. Knowing her great fondness for tea, against her coming I had prepared my best silver kettle on my best Sheffield tray, with cakes and dainty lace-trimmed linen and all accessories. At the last moment I stuck my "boilo" in the filled teakettle, so that with a mere snap of the

button I could have water boiling when I wanted it. The day was cold mid-winter and the hot tea would be a pleasure as well as—so I guessed from past experience—a loosener of tongues! I laid a fire on our precious new hearth, with a Cape Cod lighter nearby to touch it off when I heard Grandma's slow and heavy step come up the long walk from the street. It was to be a real housewarming; for this was Grandma's country long before I'd made it mine, and all I had I wanted to share with her in genuine woman sisterhood and gossip.

She came at last, all bundled from the clinging frost fog that lay upon the winter town. I ran to open quickly the double doors, with hospitable intent. But—just as she had stepped inside, upon a Sarouk in the hallway, the treacherous rug slipped under foot and if I had not caught her she would have fallen! This startled her. She stood there just inside, I holding to her arm, and she looked down with ill concealed disgust at the slipped rug, my precious waxen floor.

"Carpet too small. Floor all same ice. Grandma no good walk on ice. Grandma too old. No good." And before I could stop her, down she squatted on my hall rug.

But I didn't want to spend the afternoon sitting there in the hallway! I thought of the good friendly fire that waited us, the open fireplace whose like Grandma had never seen, the tea service all laid and ready. So I said, "Grandma, if you won't move, I'll fetch the mountain to Mahomet!" Then I picked up one corner of the rug and dragged her on it—she sitting quite content and peaceful as a cross-legged Buddha—into the living room and before the fireplace. She did not seem to want to rise, seemed per-

fectly content there. So I too sat down tailor-fashion on the rug, lighted my birch fire, sprinkled driftwood blaze on it so we could both enjoy the green-blue flame, and crouched content before it.

No word from Grandma, who sat silent. At last I said, like any child who has prepared surprises and must have grown-up approbation: "You never saw an open fire like this before, Grandma?"

"I see him, plenty time," she answered firmly.

I knew this was the only fireplace in our whole section, and so I knew that she could not have seen one. Yet I had never known Grandma to lie. She saw my quick sidelong look at her, and smiled back with her most expressive eyes.

"I see him, many time, *in movie!* I see white people sit in front of him, like so. In movie. Very good."

Then I remembered what I should have thought of sooner. Grandma was an inveterate movie fan. She never missed a night if she could help it, so it was true that fireplaces were no new thing to her. But mine had one trick which I thought maybe she did not realize and, when the logs burned down a little, I deliberately and quite ostentatiously reached for the tongs and poker, and shoved the new-made ashes down through a little trap into the cellar chute.

"Where him ash go?" she demanded, leaning far forward and peering into the fire, until I feared her hair would singe. "Where him ash go? Where you got him hole?"

When I told her of the iron pipe to the cellar and the ash-can there, she was all curiosity to see it and entirely forgot the floor of "ice" in her interest. We scrambled to our feet and made for the cellar stairway. As we passed by the tea-table, I reached out



and, unseen by her, turned the boilo switch. The cellar and all things in it, from coal-burning furnace and carpenter-shop to photographic dark room, were of delightful interest; and so, when we came back the silver pot was boiling merrily. Grandma stood suddenly still in her tracks, a sentence incomplete.

"How make hot?" she demanded, pointing to the bubbling kettle with tense interest. "No hot, before. No fire. How make hot?"

With, I'm afraid, some little of that Saxon condescension which I so honestly profess to hate, I told her of the electricity, the switch, the little rod down in the water which got all hot from fire inside of it and made the water boil. "It's something new, Grandma—a new way to make water boil, for tea."

Slowly she raised her eyes to mine and held them there. Slowly she smiled at me—a full smile, with a lifetime's wisdom in it. One eye drooped slightly, in just a vague suspicion of a wink.

"No new," she said, with great definiteness. "No new. Long time, many year, I see him—all same. My father-father, Russian man, Nulato. He want make tea, he take him little stone, all same." She pointed to the boilo stick. "He put him stone in fire and make him hot. He put him hot stone in him kettle—so—and make him boil. All same, long time. No new!"

She patted my arm in friendly wise. "You make him tea, now? Tea very good for Grandma. You make him?"

I made the tea—and never after did I try to teach Grandma anything "new"! I'd learned my lesson.

Yet Grandma was a "new" woman, in every vital sense. Witness her attitude toward Dan. She had had other marital experiences, I'm told, in her long

life, one being with the notable Russian breed Sarosky, co-discoverer with Pitka of the gold on Birch Creek in the Circle District. But her present husband was a giant Irishman, a prominent local politician and one who, from his language, you would know to be on terms of very cordial intimacy with Deity! Though expansive and kind hearted in general, there were times when—so town gossip said, after a too long ramble in the groves of Dionysos—Dan so forgot himself that he came home and beat his wife. She never mentioned this to me, but little Muk-pi (whom Grandma had befriended, as she did all the strays and helpless small things) told me that on the last occasion of such beating, Grandma had issued an ultimatum. If it happened once again, she would get a divorce.

This struck Dan as hilariously funny. He laughed with roaring and gargantuan amusement at the mere notion. An Indian woman divorce a white man? And a prominent local politician, to boot—a man who could “deliver” blocs of votes? The very idea was so huge a jest that Dan forgot himself again, in telling it to numerous groups of cronies, and in the early morning came back home to hit old Grandma so hard on the head (so Muk-pi testified), “Grandma have lump like egg!”

While Dan was quietly sleeping off his celebration next morning, Grandma arose, dressed in her best, and went down town. She walked straight to the Court House, to the office of a prominent local attorney who was the leader of the *opposition* party! Her case was strong and the shrewd lawyer realized at once that Dan would find it difficult to recover political prestige, if his Indian wife divorced *him*. In no time Dan found himself a free man. He still

did not take matters seriously, however, nor did he until he came home that night and started to turn Grandma from their house. Then he saw his mistake, but now it was too late.

Grandma explained to him—a group of her own family near as well as neighbor white men, gathered to support her—that all that he called “his” was really hers. Some years before when threatened with a serious suit, he had for safety in the courts transferred to Grandma, as his legal wife, all of his property: town house, mining claims, several fine teams of horses and numerous sleds and wagons, for he was a teamster by profession. This was all legally in her own name, and had been for some time. Now he possessed no shade of title to any portion of it! As an act of pure generosity and because she wished him no ill, she would *give* him a cabin at the other end of town and one good team with full equipment—nothing else. Nor did she!

Grandma is never “stumped.” The nearest that I ever saw her come to real embarrassment was one night at the movie. She had with her a young kinsman from the Lower River, one who had never before seen a motion picture. It was to have been a great night for Grandma, a great treat to the young buck; but things went wrong. It was too real for him. He saw real people moving there before him, a traitor was about to strike a sudden secret blow; so the young hunter rose up in his seat and shouted warning—a high loud cry that rang through our hushed movie “palace” like a war-cry, a scream of primitive clan call! Grandma, her head bowed and her pride vastly hurt at such an exhibition, led the dazed young man from the building while the rest of the audience whooped and laughed and

applauded. It was weeks before Grandma recovered her poise from this experience. I think that it was actually the most bitter moment of her long life. She had lost face. Her own kinsman (the young fool!) had disgraced her in public.

Yet Grandma's sense of humor was, as it must be to all of us, the saving grace in many a situation. And she had double portion of it, as she had double need to have; for the life of a Native, almost the only resident Native, in a community of alien and misunderstanding Whites is not always an easy one.

Our Town is very fond of fancy-dress and masquerade balls. These are a favorite form of entertainment with us, something to add color and mystery and drama to our closed-in winters—especially before the railroad came to bring us added and fresh outside interests. The whole town, literally, would come to these masked balls and much thought and time and patience were expended on the costumes, with prizes (often very costly prizes) for the prettiest costume, the funniest, and for the "best sustained character." This last prize, in a town where every one knew every other person and real disguise meant real sustained acting over a period of several hours and under close and neighborly inspection, was naturally the one for which our young blades strove the hardest. Any one who could outwit his Fairbanks neighbors for four hours on end was a real Thespian, we thought, and no little dramatic talent has filtered out from our small gold-camp, to enrich the American playhouse.

One night, at such a masked ball, we were all suddenly electrified. Shuffling across the dance floor came the perfect replica of Grandma—a merciless caricature, more Indian than her Indian self—a fat,

short, flat-footed old woman. It was overdone a little, as is usually the way with white men when they try to "act Native." For one thing, I had never seen Grandma wear moccasins, except in her own home; but this masker wore them. I had never seen Grandma except with neatly done hair, or with a proper hat upon her head; but this caricaturist wore a Tinnah elaborately beaded head-band, and the hair (where did he get that frowsy gray-touched wig, I wondered?) was tousled and none too neat. Some bright boy with a real talent for acting was certainly having a grand time of it, with his featureless masked face, his grunts and mumbles, and most of all his perfect imitation of Grandma's shuffling heavy walk.

But I was dreadfully worried. Was Grandma here? And if so, how would she take this? I knew her pride, her personal and racial pride. She had so much good common sense, such heaps of fun in her—but one could never know. To see herself so mocked and set in caricature would put her humor to a terrible test this night. I hoped she would not know, would never hear of it, and was not there to see or hear our uncontrollable Homeric laughter.

By acclamation, we all gave the prize of "best sustained character" to this clever actor; but when the unmasking hour came, we were still in the dark as to who had done it. We crowded round, the prize winners were unmasked, and ——

It was Grandma! Her own actual self—and what fun she had from our amazement, our dashed incredulity! It was her complete and perfect comeback for the lost "face" of that theater scene, you see—subtle, logical and perfect, yet done in terms we all could understand. "You've laughed, all of you, at me and at my people, thinking we do not have your

sense of humor, cannot see ourselves as you see, face facts and truths. I am above such smallness. I am old and wise and tolerant. I can see many things in many ways, can even see myself in caricature. Could *you* do that, with *your* self?"

So she had thought and reasoned, I imagine. And so, too, she was justified. We shall laugh for many a year to come at our memory of Grandma, disguised as Grandma. But down inside our laughter something else will lie and grow, until one day it has grown large enough to show at surface: respect for an unshaken poise, for personality so secure that even the cruel laughter of unthinking crowds can only strengthen it.

—One day I was speaking to Grandma of my great desire to visit the Kantishna country that lies just under Mount McKinley, that highest mountain on our continent. I had first seen the great mountain from the broad river, when I first came North, and I had always felt the tug of wish to see it closer. The Indian name was much more beautiful—the name Archdeacon Stuck had always called it—"Denali," The Most High. I called it so when speaking of it now to Grandma, but she did not seem to recognize this name. Finally I realized that it must be from another dialect of another section, this word "Denali" came.

"But what do your people call it, Grandma? Surely they have some beautiful great word for it. Please tell me."

She was silent, and after many minutes she began to speak of something else, quite different and insignificant. I was a little hurt and puzzled until, on thinking of it afterward, I realized that this great towering mountain which so dominates our inner val-

ley of the North was probably a sacred thing—its name, perhaps, like that of Yaveh, taboo in common speech.

Years afterward when I was leaving for Outside, perhaps not to return, Grandma had come to bid me a farewell. Her hands were full of little gifts for me, things of her people which she knew that I would wonder over and richly treasure. Brokenly she said her parting—words full of memories which true friends cannot lose—words which, from her, meant more than from another. But her last gift was the most precious.

"You say long time, what name my people call big mountain. My people no time say, him name. No tell him, other people.

"I say him word to you, you take him with you, to other country. If you come back, no Grandma live in Fairbanks, maybe."

She stood beside our wide south window, which looks out across the Valley. Miles and miles beyond and high above our level land—first touched with morning light, last lighted in the dusk when all the valley down below lies dark—the great peak hung in glowing color there. She took my arm and raised it with her own, in immemorial gesture of salute.

"Last-Home-of-the-Sun."

She whispered, and I bent to catch the words. Louder she said it then, "You go. You take him word. I give you. Last-home-of-the-Sun."





# THE MOUNTAIN

AT THE FOOT OF THE MOST HIGH  
LITTLE WITCH OF DENALI



## AT THE FOOT OF THE MOST HIGH

**E**VER since we first came to Alaska I had been looking out from my south window as I did that day with Grandma, over toward that great mountain hung upon the clouds—Denali, Last-Home-of-the-Sun. For years I wanted mightily to see that glowing peak not, as from here, in warm and haze dimmed vista, but close and near. A hundred and fifty miles as crows would fly, but weeks of travel by the twisting rivers lay in between; for in those days we wore no ravens' wings nor had the gleaming white wings of the planes come then to our Alaska, now conquering this space in a fugacious moment.

But one day in the latter part of August, my Seventeenths came home and said: "Some prospectors dropped in to see me this morning, with samples of a new strike over in the Kantishna country. They want me to look the place over and give them some advice about their ore. They are near Muldrow Glacier, at the foot of Mt. McKinley. I think I'll go. Do you want to go along?"

"But I thought it was such a long uncertain trip up the Kantishna River.—Have we time to make it, before the freeze-up?"

"That's what I'm coming to. They say they've found a new way through the range, over some high passes. It will only take about six days of mushing, with a pack-horse. If we start right away, I think we can make it before the snow gets bad in the mountains. Do you want to take a chance?"

Did I! Here was my long looked-for opportunity to see this topmost peak of all North America, close by and intimately. But we struck snags almost at once. Only eight or ten men had ever been through the mountains this way, up to then; and when we talked to one of them (Harry Karstens, who was in charge of the great new National Park which included Mt. McKinley and that whole inmost and high-most region of the cordillera) he very much frowned on the idea of any woman making the trip. Karstens had been one of those who climbed McKinley with Archdeacon Stuck in 1913, and is an expert mountaineer. He gave us much valuable information about the district but of course there was no trace, even, of a trail—not even a blaze. That made no difference to us for we were both experienced surveyors, and with any general directions to follow or big landmarks, knew we could find the way if any way indeed there were. But my husband took Karstens aside and I overheard him say, in no uncertain terms, "See here! She's as good a trail breaker as I am, and you needn't worry about *her* making it. If *I* make it, *she* will!" This was praise that torture could not have wrung from him, to my face—for that's the way of husbands, bless 'em! To me he merely said, "It's going to be a tough trail for the snows are already coming in the passes, Karstens tells me."

But they couldn't discourage me, for "the Red Gods called me out, and I must go." That's how I happened to be, as Fannie Quigley afterward told me I was, the first white woman ever to cross over to Kantishna and back through the "new passes." The journey was a business trip for my husband, but to me it was true pilgrimage. And there was just

sufficient dash of danger in the undertaking to give it a fine flavor. What's more, when Karstens pointed to our map and said, "When you get here, where the map ends, you bear down a long draw. But watch out for the quicksands in the canyon!" then I was really thrilled. Not at the quicksands, for they were long ago familiar things—but that for once I actually was to reach map's end! Many of the peaks and passes at one part of our "short cut through the hills," were as yet nameless; and what we then called Copper Mountain, one of our objective landmarks, has since become Mount Eielson in honor of our Fairbanks pioneer in air.

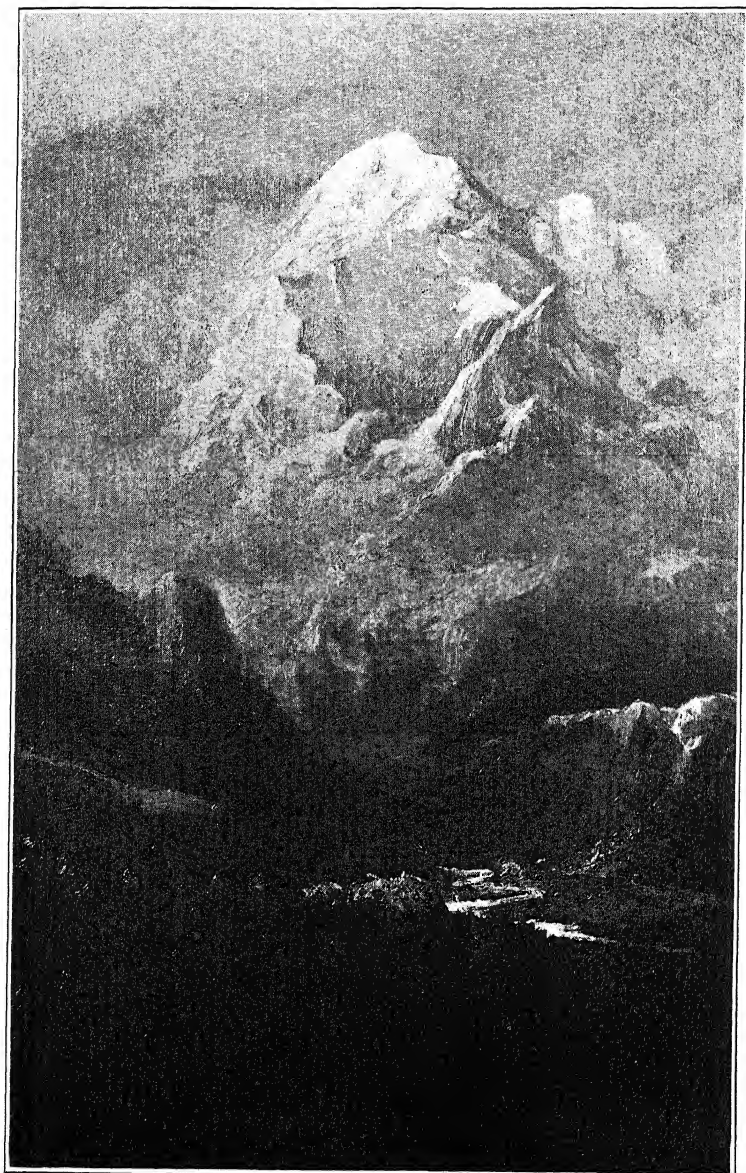
We went and returned by two slightly different ways, because on part of this trek we travelled with a Russian prospector who wished a "Gov'ment man" to see his little claim and pass upon its prospects. It's a responsibility to be, for years, the only trained mining engineer in a mining empire! We spent a night at Zeboff's cabin on the head of the Shushana, reached by long travel up the blackest gulch I think I ever saw, cracked open into the heart of barren hills that grew more eery and more shadowed the further we reached into them. The "cabin" was a mere hole blasted from the face of mountain, and our "bed" was a mere ledge, down which rock water dripped all night. It was a type of bed which makes getting up a real pleasure! A rough wooden front enclosed the cabin, and as we ate a ravenous supper of that utmost daintiness of all hunters, mountain-sheep steak—and drank stout cups of strong hot Russian tea, so mightily invigorating after you have been mushing twelve to fourteen hours—Zeboff told us in his amazing, vivid, broken English how, the last time he had come back "home," he found that a great

bear had ambled down the mountainside, torn open this projecting roof of stone slab and of moss, and eaten all his winter's cache of flour and bacon! That was why Zeboff made the trip to Healy and happened to meet us there.

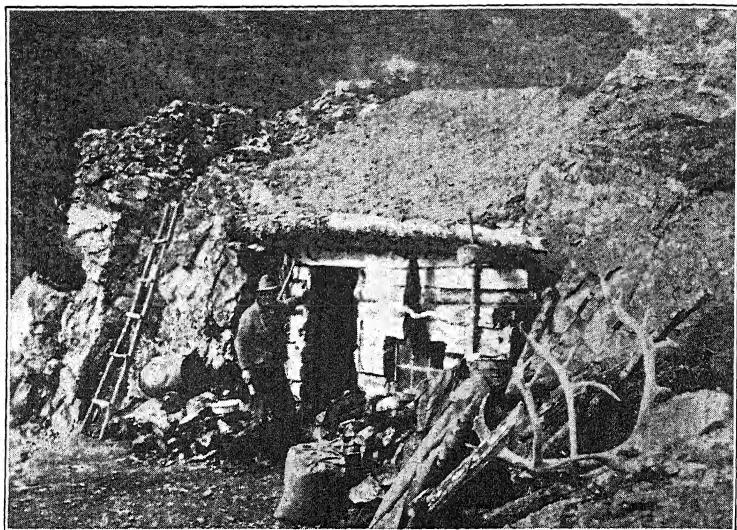
From Zeboff's we swung south up Teklanika River, past Sable Mountain to the East Fork of the Toklat, through Polychrome Pass. We crossed the main Toklat near Divide Mountain and struck through Highway Pass and over Far Pass to McKinley Canyon, at the edge of Muldrow Glacier. We followed the McKinley River to Wonder Lake, skirted the shores of the lake and dropped over into Moose, Eureka and Friday Creeks. Here I spent eleven days with Fannie Quigley while my husband and hers scouted the mining claims of the entire district. Returning, we spent one day at Copper Mountain near Muldrow Glacier, then came by Sable Pass, along Igloo Creek, across Sanctuary and Savage Rivers and down to the railroad construction camp at Riley—now known as Mt. McKinley Station.

To-day an automobile road is building over this then unblazed rough trail, a road on which already hundreds of tourists yearly travel in true comfort, straight to the rocky inmost heart of our Alaska. The way is easy now, by plane or auto. But I am just a little queer, like Janet, for I would not exchange my old trail-breaking way for theirs!

Down in the pockets of the hills the hidden valleys blazed with yellow birch leaves, and high-bush cranberries were red to bursting upon the passes. Soft moss, in color traced with silver, spread like a spongy carpet. And here, on high-above-the-timber-line expanses, I saw again those alpine fields of heavenly



*From a painting by Sydney Laurence.*  
AT THE FOOT OF THE MOST HIGH.



**ZEBOFF'S CABIN, WITH RUNNING WATER IN EVERY ROOM!**



*Photograph by Gene Müller.*

**WHEN WE WENT TO KANTISHNA WE WERE "OFF THE MAP." NOW THERE ARE SHELTER TENTS AND SIGN-BOARDS ON THAT TRAIL.**



blue flowers, which seem somehow so much more frequent where blossoms touch the very edge of cold. Within the Arctic or on some high place where cold forever clings, blue flowers seem most at home—short stemmed wild flowers, with blue and purple the predominating colors. Julian Huxley says that moth flowers, destined to be visited at night, are usually white and scented, whereas most bird-generated flowers are red of petal. I speak from a mere observation and have no science here; but can it be that our bee-visited, High North Alaskan posies are blue and violet so often because the wise bees love these lovely colors? I wish some Maeterlinck would tell us.

My most intimate—and, I'll confess, a much too intimate!—contact with grizzlies occurred on this trip. Plodding up a long gulch one afternoon, I happened to look up to the right rim, my ear caught suddenly by a slight sound there. I saw a sight that turned my blood to shivers! Three grizzly bears were outlined sharply against the sky, and as I looked up at them from this angle they seemed, even though a good quarter mile away, to be monstrous. No wonder the grizzly is called "*ursus horribilis*!" There was a great bear, the mother apparently, with that unmistakable concave grizzly profile to her giant head; and with her was a yearling about the height of a heifer, and another little fellow the size of a very large dog.

In a half whisper—for the canyons echoed so—I called my husband's attention. He kept right on and only grinned back at me.

"But don't you see that they are *following* us? This is *their* gulch. We have no right here. And this too early snow reminds them that it is nearly winter sleep-time. I've heard they always fill up

well with a square meal, before they hole in for the winter. And—we have only a twenty-two!”

“This is a national reserve and no hunting is allowed,” he said. “It is the law.”

“But *they* are hunting *us*.”

“Stuff and nonsense! Bears have poor eyesight and they’re curious, that’s all. Probably they’ve never seen a horse before, and they just want to follow along a way, to get us ticketed. Forget it!”

I couldn’t forget it. My conscience wouldn’t let me, for one thing. I had three shaggy bearskins safe at home in Fairbanks: a polar bear, a black bear, and an enormous blackish-brown Kodiak with its stout curved claws. And there were three of them, and here were three of us. How I wished the pack-horse well back at the camp at Healy—if it was really horses that interested those bears!

Just then, the old lady reared up on her massive haunches against the sky (and I give you my word that she looked like the Empire Building!), threw up her head and uttered such a roar that the whole mountain-chain seemed to shake to the reëcho, which ran up and down that gulch in a reverberation lasting whole *minutes*, so it seemed.

“Listen to that!” I whispered. “Does that sound like curiosity? It sounds to me more like defiance.”

“It isn’t. Don’t you know that bears don’t wantonly attack people?”

“Ye-s-s-s, I’ve heard that, too. But does *she* know it? Maybe we’re *not* people. Maybe we’re just big game—or a grub-stake!”

I knew well that little black bears, of which we saw so many near our town of Fairbanks, were playful, friendly, and not harmful—would run away from you, nine times in ten. But grizzlies were a different

breed, and I knew quite a number of old-timers who had been horribly maimed or killed by "brownies" such as these, a truly fearless animal. I had heard many a hunter's or a trapper's tale of grizzly short sight, bad temper. I knew that this was near their holing-in time, when bears are most uneasy, nervous, scouting the neighborhood of their selected hibernaculum to see that all is safe and friendly thereabouts, before they go to that long winter sleep which helps to while away lean-larder time—in some well chosen cave or under rock-shelf overgrown with brush or tree roots, that hold the snow until a solid roof is frozen for them, above their hollow. I knew a grizzly was so massive, so well muscled, and his nerves so blanketed, that even metal-jacket or expanding bullet driven by the highest power of rifle will not always stop him unless it strikes the spine—the "Crile" or "nerve shot,"—and we had but a twenty-two! And how could one use even this with grizzlies (provided even that we had the skill, *and* lead) who rear up to attack, and at close quarters? Although with punctured heart he'll keep on coming, hunters tell, with no apparent loss of strength or ferocity—"because he don't know rightly when he's dead!" And I knew, too, that bears can run up hill much quicker than a man can run down grade. I'd heard too many an old Sourdough tale of that swift, seeming-clumsy but mile-eating bear trot, to have any shred of faith left in my own feet!

Because I knew this, and had heard such fearsome Nimrod tales, I will admit that the next forty minutes were about the longest I ever spent. We kept right on, but so did they—following just opposite us, up on the ridge, always in sight. Every few minutes, old mama bear would rear herself up slowly to that

tremendous height of hers, and roar at us. What made it worse, the gulch was getting narrower every moment. If it *was* curiosity on her part (though I didn't believe it) then I vastly regretted that distinguishing characteristic of my sex!

But getting scared is mighty tiring business. You can get dreadfully scared for a short time, but you can't keep it up for long. Something else takes its place. After a little while you get rather worn out and rather bored by scaredness and so, at last, it quits. That's why I can honestly say that I don't know just when that grizzly family party got their eye-full of us and disappeared. The trail was hard, one had to watch one's way. After an hour and a bad crossing of the stream, I thought to look again—and they were gone.

I don't recall this episode with any great pride, for I was scared and there's no use denying it. But—my only regret is, I *do* wish I knew just how big that grizzly was! It has been humorously suggested that the largest grizzlies apparently do not inhabit the same range of country as accurate scales! However, she *was* big, and I am mighty glad that our old lady grizzly didn't think that we looked appetizing, crawling there across her bare and mountainy cupboard-shelf.

On four of our twelve traveling days we were almost continually in thick wet snow—so thick we had to trek at times by compass and dead reckoning, as no landmark at all was visible. The day before we reached McKinley, snow fell so thickly that, although we heard the bell upon a pack-horse on the opposite slope of the narrow gulch we were steeply descending, we could see nothing and only learned later at Copper Mountain who it was that had passed

us behind the wet white curtain which made the way such heavy going.

That night as we lay opposite the foot of great Denali, but muffled in the August snow which swirled about and blotted everything from sight, we seemed to have reached the uttermost bound of the everlasting hills, to be the guests of primal night and of the wilderness. The land appeared to lie abandoned to the weather, in an eternity, and we seemed lost there in the corridors of silence, the vestibules of night, out on the raveled fringes of the world of men. And through the length of all that miserable cold night, these lines of a till now forgotten poem kept ringing in my mind—

“When the snow begins, and the blasts denote  
I am nearing the Place—  
The power of the Night—the press of the Storm—  
The post of the Foe.”

I tried hard to imagine, as I crawled between what seemed like frozen blankets, how a sheep steak would sound, sizzling in the fry-pan! But even that thought would not warm me, for the wet snow had penetrated to my very marrow. The storm had so delayed us we were forced to camp above timber-line, and fireless except for a can of “tin heat.” As I lay that night, shaking so that my teeth chattered like castanets, I thought, “Now, this will never do. If that husband of mine hears this tooth-chatter, he’ll wish he hadn’t fetched me.” So in the dark I quietly reached for an old scarf and tied my jaws up tight, as though I had the mumps—so tight those tell-tale teeth could make no sound!

But that next morning, the agony of long and sleep-

less night of marrow chill was utterly forgotten and we were much too far from "cold germs" and the press of people to be ill affected. As day boiled over the night's rim at last, the god-like peak rose in such height above us that, standing at its foot beside the glacier, one had to throw one's head far back to see the whole vast heaven-piercing summit of it. It is a mountain tossed upon a range of mountains to double-top them—tossed as a god might toss in some mad moment—lifting its sheer four miles in air in one broad sweep of giant pinnacle. Pike's Peak in Colorado rises 9,000 feet above the surrounding country, but this stupendous mountain rears itself full 20,000 feet above the glaciated quicksand of this valley floor. The purple clouds of dawn crumbled upon its sides like grapes and ran in wine-red glow to stain its snow slopes, lush with cold. The blue-black shadows of the lower ranges broke slowly from the massy base in the now gathering light, until the mighty girdle of the earth seemed standing up on end in this unutterable majesty of patient stillness, natural bigness, and unconquerable hardness. The bastion of the mountain chain surrounded on all sides in close formation, silent peaks of aged snow now sun-flushed. A streamer cloud, the hall-mark of the very loftiest summits, drifted above like altar smoke. One seemed to see the very gate of heaven thrust open, the flaming lute-thronged and angelic door of paradise envisioned, in those celestial-broidered cloths enwrought with golden and with crimson light draping this highest altar.

Something pulled at my knees—my stiff and Calvinistic knees that never had been taught to kneel. Something inside me tugged—some primal reverence and awe for something far above expression, except

in terms of holiness. I know, if I had been alone there, in very deed I should have knelt and worshipped The Most High.

The night after our heavenly sight of Denali we spent upon "Alaska feather beds" of spruce boughs, than which there's nothing better, and in a real cabin—a most comfortable cabin standing in shadowy spruce and woven copse between the peak and Wonder Lake, which lies like mirror pool of steel-blue indigo, a foot-pond to The Most High. Our host was a very Scotch trapper and prospector who treated us like new-found prodigal sons, though mountain-sheep steak and blueberry pies proved welcome substitute for the proverbial calf! Alec has lived there at the foot of the great mountain for many years. He freights his own grub all by himself from Nenána, the long way round through the "low divide," in spring while snow is still good sledding but the days are long enough for work. He had begun early the March before, and made three round-trips between that time and the twenty-fourth of April, although it had been thirty to fifty below on the trail most of the time.

"The bears are eating lots of my cached meat in the fall and I had a number of wolfs come within thirty yards of the cabin one night about nine o'clock, and they howled for ten or fifteen minutes. I thought they might jump my dogs, so I got my lantern and went out and that drove them off. So when in Fairbanks last I bought a new gun from Bob Bloom. Here she is, a model-54 Winchester and she shoots the same shells as the old Springfield. My old 30-40 was worn out and no good for bear. The bears and wolfs will have to give me a clear field or look out, from *now* on!"

There is no regular mail service at all into the Kantishna country. He told us that a sister in Ontario "just happened to take it into her head to send me a cake. That was a little over a year ago. I got the cake just ten months after. However, the cake being Scotch short-bread was good yet, and I shared it up with a number of parties here, and they all thought as I did it was still O. K."

I suggested sending him some magazines when I got back to Fairbanks and Alec was delighted. He spoke at once for *The Atlantic*, *Harpers*, *Scribners*, *North American* and *Century*—all pretty solid "quality" reading matter, I thought. When I congratulated him upon his choice, he said he liked "stuff I can get my teeth into. It's a long wolf-howl from Nenána to the Lake here, and trash is not worth hauling. Just once a year I get my stuff, tugging the bundled mail upon my sled, the miles. I read them o'er and o'er, you see; and you'll want summat is real meat, not sweet or pastry, upon a fifth or sixthly reading! I would have meat that I must chew to get the juice from—not easy-come amusement—alone here winter nights, when the two Bears up yonder 'walk round and watch the Pole,' like the old Watts hymn says."

I had a deep-down admiration for that unpliant Scotch assurance in his brain, that confidence and zest in thought-out things. You may be sure that Alec got his magazines!

He was delighted that we had found our way "over the hump," as he called the Range, and that night we enjoyed what Alaskans call a "chewing match," mild at first but wilder as we "bit into the argyments." The old man told us something of his adventures, for he was one whose face was contoured



by the winter winds and it was full of memories and the strength that comes with satisfied aloneness. He vigorously insisted that here, with the mountain and the lake and dogs for company, "Thou are no thy lane;" and with true Scottish argumentative philosophy, he set out to prove to us—and did—that only those who have been long in city pent know anything of the real ache of solitude, for solitude is only terrible among the jumbled piles of murk-mile buildings in the towns.

"The mountains? Aye, they're great and friendly; but no ower friendly, mind. They're an upliftin' lot. You've been to Aberdeen, ye say? Well, I was born there, and these mountains here remind me most of hooded rich-gowned univairsity dons, like them you will have seen there. And He's the bigwig of them all. You live with them and learn from them—much do ye learn, by keeping quiet and listening to what they've got to tell. They live their lone, and don't let common mortals push too pesterin' near. They keep their dignity of distance—a donnish crowd."

He loved the intimate winters, too, when trap-line was his business, even with "bleak December's winds insuin', baith snell and keen." For like the true Scot that he was, he knew his Burns. He told us secrets of the little moose-ponds lying down between his sacred hills, lakes owned by lily-pads and muskrats. He told us of the canny muskrat's three varieties of shelter, for varied purpose: the little feeding station, built while the ice is forming in the fall and made by pushing grassy clumps up through an ice-hole, so that they take the form of long rolls like the Hamburg coming from the holes of a meat grinder! This matter forms a heap upon the ice, and deep inside

it Mr. Muskrat shapes a little chamber, with outlet down through ice into his lake.

But this is just a little feeding or resting station, a shelter cabin on his many winter trails—a refuge in emergency when “caught out short,” as mushers say. His regular dwelling is an elaborate, large, dome-shaped house, built on the very bottom of his pond before the freeze-up and made from various water-growing things. This may hold his living quarters and his sleeping shelf, or his real home may be a bank burrow, its entrance under water but with chambers back into the earth above the lake level.

“With a hind leg of moose a-danglin’ from yon spruce tree back of cabin door, and enough wood cut for the morrow—what more can ye ask of our Maker? And why should one not be right happy here, far from the drum o’ countless footfall and the smell o’ gasoline? There’s times, in June, I’ll think of Inverness-shire, might be, when some rare golden posie-bloom seen here will twitch a memory to the thought o’ brae and broom. But here’s a place of peace.”

His was indeed a rich content and coupled with a neatness of housekeeping that would shame many a tidy woman and with more than any normal woman’s skill in exquisite cookery. This gaunt Scot has remained ever since one of our dearest friends of all the North, for the far trails have again crossed many times, to our great joy. To me, he will forever be the Man of the Mountain, prophet and priest of that great Hill of God which stands alone—stark, brooding on infinities, rooted in timeless granite. Alec is something of a philosopher—indeed, he is very much of a philosopher. In wandering Alaska’s many nameless trails, I have found several things

to add to those which were too wonderful for Agur, son of Jakeh! I have found men and women who are by profession ministers to human suffering, yet wear no lettered tag of M. D. or of D. D. to close their names. I have discovered genuine scientists like Fannie Quigley, yet without benefit of any so-called education; and others such as Alec—or men of smiddies and the plough, perhaps, the loom and bothies—who were yet true philosophers. When young, I sat with schoolgirl worshipping wonder before three teachers who were truly named philosophers. I tried to keep pace with their leaping minds, to learn the lessons set by them. But here in the High North I learned, from Alec and from others of his kind, that one can sit down at the feet of Silence, Loneliness, and Space and, if one really learns their lessons, then one has passed indeed a stiffish course and won degree of Doctor of Philosophy more real than Harvard offers. I have known many untaught men—who do not recognize the walls of any college, upon whose shoulders rest no crimson-hooded gowns of doctorate—yet who excel in true philosophy, which is not knowledge but a way of looking at our world. Alec would smile if he should see this statement. But it is true! And surely those who deal on intimate terms with Earth *must* hold a metaphysical mind, if they would be content. Farmers, miners, trappers, woodsmen, learn that

“ The Earth does not argue,  
Is not pathetic, has no arrangements,  
Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise,  
Makes no discriminations, has no conceivable failures,  
Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out,  
Of all the powers, objects, states, it notifies, shuts none out.”

Those who live in cities filled with millions, must walk daily among noise. But Alec's valley at the foot of the Most High is like a withdrawn place of sanctuary, consecrate, set apart, silent, untouched, unshaken—a place to take breath after hurried living. Day unto day utters its speech, redistils knowledge, for one shut in by the embargo of the snows. There is a good deal to be had here of what wise Dr. Flexner calls the soul of a university; for "severe, prolonged and fundamental thinking" can be (and must be, if spring is to find our Alec healthy, sane and living!) turned out during a winter spent alone at the foot of Denali—hunting, trapping, mining, logging, building, tending dogs, cooking—and contemplating something of the celestial sphere!

These men who live much in the open, knowing both space and silence, are bound to become celestially minded. To them, the stars come close in daily speech. Lying out alone upon untented hills will breed familiarity with Heaven, as well as surer love for rolling Earth—the beautiful one sister that we know, dancing on with the rest of that interminable "ceaseless cotillion of sisters."

So the old trapper in his cabin by the Wonder Lake sits winter-long at foot of The Most High, holding his own life close in his own two hands. He turns it slowly here and there, asearch through more than one unhurried reading to find its inner meaning, law and cause. Although a road is building now, no jangling telephone yet breaks across his quiet thought, no roar of city traffic comes up through his little window. Taking full time there, he peels off the outside shell of things and looks well at the meaty kernel—making sure test of ripeness, ere he swallow.

## LITTLE WITCH OF DENALI

**F**ANNIE QUIGLEY, my hostess for many days in the Kantishna, is one of the real sportswomen and all-around capable pioneers of the North. Archdeacon Stuck outfitted at her cabin before his famous ascent of Denali, and she has friends among the great hunters, explorers and scientists of all America; for her little Alaskan home on its steep mountain slope has been a gathering place, for the last quarter century, of men intent on penetrating into the farthest secrets of the hidden mountains. One day not long ago in Washington, at a meeting of National Girl Scout officials to whom I was introduced as an Alaskan, a lovely woman with an aura most patrician came up to me and, taking both my hands, said:

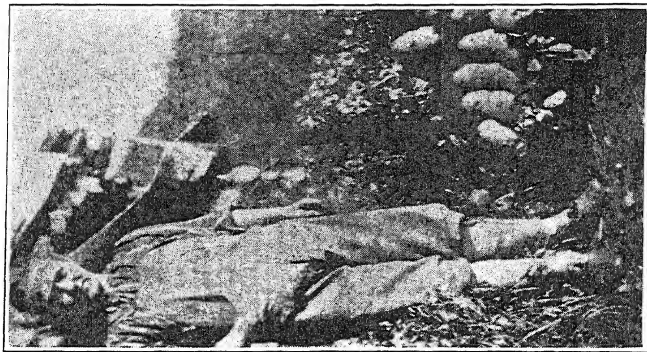
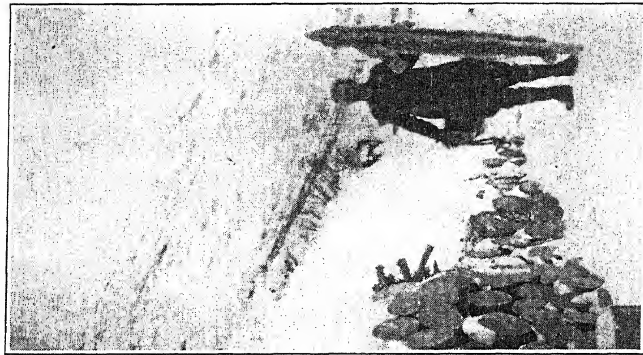
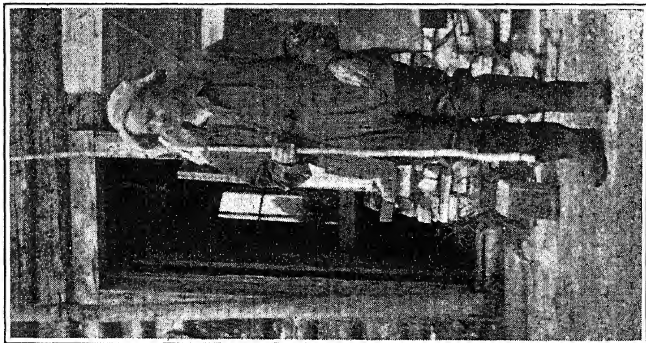
"Tell me, are you *Fannie Quigley's* Mrs. Davis? For if you are, I want to know you. My husband spent a winter studying mountain sheep in what he called the Wilderness of Denali; and he considers Fannie Quigley one of the wonders of the world. She has written us about your coming. Is there anything she can't do? Please tell me about her. I'd rather meet her than an empress. Doesn't she ever visit the States?"

It's true, there's very little Fannie can not do, but she has made only one short trip Outside in thirty years—and was disgusted with our whole civilization! Back to the hills she scurried, those hills where she had lived so long and was, during most of that

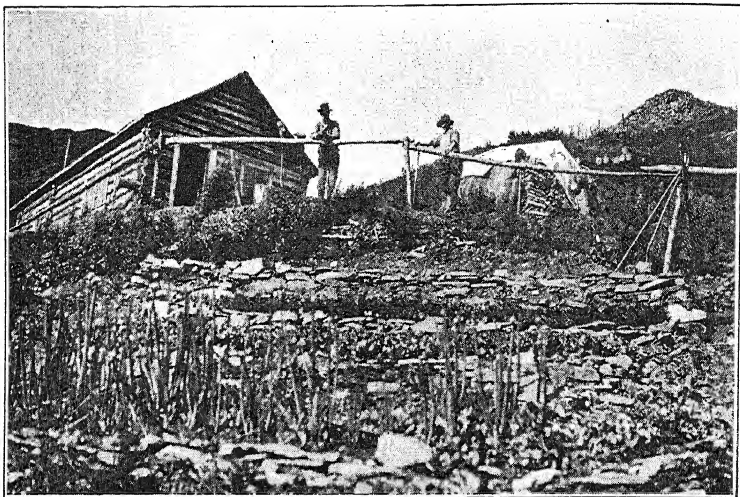
time, the only woman in a great and hidden heaven-touching region. To spend eleven days with her alone, to tramp the hills with her and with her pack-dogs, to hear her tell the story of her life that sounded like a book of Jack London's tales—that was one of the rarest treats I've ever known and worth a dozen pioneering high-pass trails.

She is a prospector, and a good one. She is a miner too—and there's a difference in those words. She is a trapper, and has the skilled and trained eye of the born naturalist, having collected specimens for many of our great museums; for she wears in her level screwed-on head the veritable key to Science—two sharp eyes for observation. And who must be so watchfully observant as the trapper? She is full, too, of the wonder and the curiosity that shape the soul of Science. She is not only a fine shot and the peer of truly great hunters, but she tracks her own game, prefers to hunt alone, skins and dresses, packs and caches even such massive beasts as moose and bear, skins out the cape and horns of mountain sheep, and can both butcher and cook any game meat, to the queen's taste. It was at her table I first ate young black bear, found it much like range beef and, as old-timers say, "mighty easy eating!" Fannie's doughnuts fried in bear grease proved to me the truth of that old saying in the West, which I had often heard but never before tested: "Bear grease is the best butter." I've learned that recently, for the first time in two hundred years, bear meat has become popular again in Paris and is now to be found in the markets there. If any Parisian cooks are equal to Fannie Quigley, then I don't wonder it is popular!

This little woman of Bohemian blood is but half the size of me, but worth twenty of me on the trail or



"FANNIE DOES SO MANY THINGS, BUT HERE SHE IS AT THREE OF THEM: PROUD IN EQUAL DEGREE OF BOTH HER FANSIES AND POTATOES; HOLDING A MONSTER LYNX SHE TRAPPED AND SKINNED; GOING FISHING."



JOE AND I TAKE A LOOK AT FANNIE'S GARDEN.



THE QUIGLEY CLAIM LIES ON A STEEP HILLSIDE.



in camp! She was born in our Middle West and, speaking and knowing no English until late girlhood, worked her way to the coast along the raw new Union Pacific, worked her way in the North by running an eating-house in the Klondike, and has worked her way ever since by one of the most happy combinations of active hands and equally active wits it has been my privilege to know. Not all of our American pioneering stock is Mayflower descended! Here is another true and actual Colonial Dame of America's to-day, alive and in the rosy robust flesh.

And she can talk! Thank fortune, all the farness and the stillness haven't quieted Fannie's good gift of fervid vivid speech—dramatic, cogent, full of keen figurative language that is fairly Shakespearian in its rugged raciness. I listened while Fannie talked, and all the panorama of the West and North unrolled to Fannie's telling. She is herself a little less-than-five-foot library of all that's worth while in Alaska's past and future. Alone with her within that cozy home-made cabin on the steep slope, the first thing in the morning I heard Fannie preparing those so admirable griddle cakes of sour dough sizzling on a bear-greased "spider," and telling of Ogden or of Eldorado. *She* called it "Heldorado," and wasn't wrong at that! And the last thing at night, I went to sleep with Fannie's epic tales still ringing in my ears. I lay and looked out through the always open door ("I can't be shut up in a cage," says Fannie) and gazed upon the garden of the autumn stars that looked so very cold about the sky, like silver lamps or points of fairy scimiters. The low moon caught upon the opposite hill, those hills that are so truly Fannie's since she has made them hers in peace and quiet and patient understanding "with creatures yet

unbroken to the plow." And I was wrapped contentedly, for I was brimful of the friendliness which in this little cottage I had found.

One night I was awakened by a slight sound and saw, in the moonlight that streamed through the open door, a little quick-darting ermine that had entered and leaped upon the table spread out for breakfast, and was now trying to pry open the sugar-bowl. His elongated narrow body twitched as though pulled by wires, in nervous energy of movement like a squirrel. His very extended neck and narrow head were sharply outlined against the burnished sheen of harvest moon, and his sharp little eyes caught every glints of moonshine as he darted about the table, chuckling to himself in comment upon the strange bright things he found laid out there, emitting thin startled squeals when those quick feet clicked knife and spoon together.

The movement of that head on its long neck was snake-like, truly. Yet what a big heart beat within that little body, to make him enter boldly into this cave of sleeping enemy giants and pry about here—"Without fear, without reproach"—as bold and brave and daring, as heart of noble under an ermine mantle!

—Her husband is as long and lean as Fannie is short and stocky. On the trail together they are a queer-matched pair but complementary in their skills and equally competent in that fine old pioneer game of necessitous adventure with primal food and shelter problems, alert to note the fall of Nature's cards and quick to take a trick when any chance arises. They are not "experts in apprehension," are not the type who conjure up imaginary difficulties, but they can lay real difficulties low. So different, yet such per-

fect partners! Joe Quigley hails from Western Pennsylvania so he is not unused to "hills," for he will dignify none of the mighty "humps" he lives amongst by any other name. To him, as to the other few Kantishna dwellers, there is but one "The Mountain." This is a typical expression of Joe's natural under-statement of fact, for he is cautious, quiet, and slow of speech whereas Fannie is daring, darting in her motions, and pours out words in rich hyperbole. Fannie is self-taught, solely. She learned her English after she had run away from home, and learned it from a fellow-worker who was Irish, to whom she gave her tips for lessons! So Fannie's English has a curious twist of Irish to it. But Joe "went to school clean through McGuffey's readers." It is just forty years now, almost to a day, since Joe first crossed the Chilkoot—one of the pioneering few who did cross that great pass *before* the Klondike stampede.

Fannie and I spent our fall days together, packing the dogs and scouting out that inner land between the hills, a vast whispering gallery where, in the expectant, magnetic, startling-clear air a voice will carry from mountain back to mountain, as much as two full miles. Later I knew why Fannie, who had learned to throw that deep-pitched voice of hers across a mountain gulch, found the reduced conversation of a drawing room unbearable and why, as she said, "people always stared at me." She is a wonderful human, this little witch of Denali, with courage, grit, curiosity, open mind. She is as wise as keen—and she is womanly.

Fannie was full of bits of nature lore which I found a true education. One of her sayings which most caught my mind was that "We humans are the

deadliest of all beasts. Most beasts don't see so well as we do, and it's right here we have the drop on 'em. A gun is a long eye as well as a long arm. It can see at a distance and it can hit at a distance. And then, there are field-glasses—I never leave the cabin without mine, you'll see. No hunter does. And to use glasses proper, you sit down to it, or lie down, and take your time for a long, long look, and a slow steady look—*all* over the country you are in—before you make your first move. And the glasses must be *clean*—very clean—or you're just wasting time. A fellow who just stands and takes a quick sweep 'round with his glass, isn't any hunter at all. Devil a mountain sheep will you see *that* way. I've heard that kind of men say, 'There's no game here. I didn't see any.' What do *they* know? The hills are full of game. Even when you're stalking 'em, they're really stalking you. I know that I've been watched—hunted, followed, tracked—by bears and wolves, though never harmed. Afterward, when I've seen their tracks in my old trails, it's made my back prickle. I've wondered just how near they were!

“But an un-experienced fellow could walk these hills for days, perhaps, and say, 'There's nothing here.' He'd miss even a moose, and a moose is as big as a barn door! Alaska Indian's word for moose *means* 'big.' But an Indian who had never seen a trolley-track wouldn't know that the *track* meant a trolley-car—now, would he? Or that a trolley-car had been along there soon before and was likely to pass that way again, soon? That's how it is, here. A wire down through the middle of the street, a pair of steel rails put just so far apart—they say 'trolley' to you, plain as day, for you know the signs. Well, a little mark on a tree, a twig broke just a certain

way, a mashed place in the marsh, mean 'moose' to me. That's how. I know the signs, too, and my moose is plain as your trolley-car.

"Did you ever see a moose cow swim a river with her calves? If the swim is hard and long, she lets 'em lean on her to rest themselves, every so often. It's cute to watch her. Moose and caribou ain't ready to shoot until about now, early in September. Antlers ain't from the velvet, sooner. You can call up a bull moose with your hands for trumpet, or a birch-bark horn. You make the sound the cow moose makes. It ain't a loud sound, but it can be heard a good long ways. One fellow over near here has a yearling moose for pet—John Hansen, who has a fox-farm down below on the Kantishna. Year ago last spring he was out rowing on the lake near his place and he saw a cow moose and two calves—one of 'em just new-born—out on a little island. The cow took to the water when she saw him, and one calf. Hansen rowed off, not wanting to scare the mother more.

"Well, next day he got to wondering how and if Mrs. Moose had got the day-old calf offen the island, and he rowed back to see. The small thing was still there, and all alone, and pretty peaked. So Hansen knew that the mother wasn't coming back, or maybe something'd happened to her so she couldn't. So he took the long-legged little thing home in his boat, and raised it up on Klim. We heard about it, account of him using up his whole winter's cache of milk on her. Wanted to borrow more, until spring haul.

"That calf become so pet, Hansen couldn't turn 'round it wasn't at his heels! Now it's so big it can't get through his cabin door, but stays around close to

his buildings and you just can't *drive* it off. Hansen can call it, and it comes running to him. It's cute to see. It don't like strangers much—just tolerates them—won't act friendly. But say—you ought to see it eating fish! Crazy about fish, sure does enjoy it. Who'd ever think a moose would take to fish?

"Freighters over here who uses horses, 'round Healy Fork, turn 'em out winters on the range and they get fat, Joe tells me. He's often seen 'em. Winds, over there, keep the feed clear of snow. Saw twenty-five of them out rustling, last time he went over. And Joe says they will nicker at a moose they see. Think it's a stray horse! Queer, ain't it? The moose are cuter, 'cause they're native wild. *They* know the difference.

"Expanding bullets are best for heavy animals. Once they sent me some steel-points by mistake. I filed 'em down. Sometimes they worked. One hunter is better than two when you're after big game, because you have to be changing your mind all the time. You'll change a whole day's hunting plan in a second, while one foot is in the air just ready to put down—if your eyes or ears tell you something new. And you can't be bothering to explain to the other fellow all about it. When Joe and I hunt together, we hunt separate. And you don't want to waste shots. It costs too high, in lots of ways. I'd be ashamed not to fetch in a hundred pounds of meat to a cattridge. A 30-30 is big enough artillery for black bear or moose, but a 30-40 is a heap sight better. And caribou, though they aren't large-bodied, will walk off with a load of lead. That's serious when your rifle means eighty per cent. of your grub-stake, and you have to make every shot count. Quick death means clean butchering; and that

counts, too, when you've got a carcass to handle alone, like I do. Heart, brain, or spinal cord is the mark. One well-put bullet is enough—or should be! A shot in the guts means a messy job of butchering, if you're out for meat, and a flank shot ruins a good hide if you're out for fur. *You* may be thinking of the mercy of it—that's open. *I'm* thinking about grub-stake.

"But why, I ask you, woman, shouldn't we humans kill clean, when we have all the drop? We've got better and better guns each year—telescope sights and high power rifles—and by now, any hunter worth his salt should pop his meat off, pretty and clean. He has his 'long eyes' like the Indians say, to spy his game long before the game has any chance to spot him—if he's cautious and fly. He has his 'long arm' to strike a blow with, from so far away no beast has half a chance to defend itself. With all of that, mixed in with just a mite of common sense, is there any earthly excuse for anything but a clean neat job, I ask you—whether you're shooting for meat, or just out to get a set of horns—to mount and clutter up some hallway?"

And Fannie's right, there isn't any excuse. But then, most hunters find that there's a lot of spacious free air all about a mountain sheep, for instance. And misplaced holes in that same air are far more frequent happenings than well placed holes in big-horns!

These big-horns range on the most rugged and arid peaks and the black passes of Fannie's central mountain region are a favorite habitat, for these animals don't need much water, or often. Fannie calls them "delicate feeders, very tasty. They have a salad sort of diet. There's lots of things a moose will

eat—things that smell bad and taste rotten—your big-horn won't touch. Maybe that's why their meat's so delicate and fine. They like the sweet mountain grass and blue mountain flowers and the purest, cleanest mountain water, which they'll come down to from the peaks, like as not, about dusk time. And what a boulder he is when you startle him! Lord, but I've seen 'em jump! They like the little greeny pockets in the black summer foot-hills. Those white specks look like blobs of snow there, but it's a band of ewes and lambs; and further on, I spy a bunch of rams. You'd think them snow patches, till they wind you, and *then* watch them stream off to the hills—up, *always* up—to where they know is safety.

“Eagles is about their only enemy, and eagles is bad, too, for foxes and spawning salmon. Eagles is death on the little long-leggedy lambs, that are dropped along about in June. Wolves get them at the springs, sometimes, but the little lambs don't go down to water at first, ever. Their ma tucks 'em away under a rock and says—‘Now kids, you just stay put and don't you budge or squeak, mind, 'til I get back. You hear me?’ And there they stay. I've come on 'em, once or twice, and I can swear they sure do mind their mas! They won't move a muscle, even when you're right on top of 'em. Why—I've almost stepped *onto* 'em! Then, like as not, on your way down, you'll see a comical old ewe peeking at you round a rock—wondering did you harm her baby!”

Of all real predatory animals, my Kantishna friends seemed to think that, next to man, the wolf is the most universal, keen and dangerous to other wild life—cunning and strong, and living by his tireless lively wits. The wolf is a parent type of dog.



"He is canis and he is canny, ca-canny." But he's not one to start anything he can't stop, and ever since "villainous saltpeter" was first unearthed he has realized that he was no match any longer for predatory man. Man has a long arm and carries a stick of iron. How he uses it is a mystery, so Lupus takes no chances; but catch a man without his long arm and then it's quite a different game. Like the dog his cousin, Lupus is much more apt to attack things running than things facing him. So, if you haven't your iron stick about you, don't run! No hunter or close observer denies the keen and almost uncanny intelligence of wolves. And Stefansson puts the wolf case concisely and plainly when he states that they "can run faster than all animals that are more powerful, and they are more powerful than any animal that can run faster." Fannie thinks that one should add to this another very important factor—the thing which, with their great cunning, puts them next to man in potency as a game-hunter: they see much better than do most wild animals.

One day we came upon a very old, deserted, trapper's cabin, of crudely hewn logs and now so sunken in the soft muskeg that the door was just about dog-high and one must crawl to get inside. How the field-mice scampered and the little ground-squirrels scolded, as we great giants noisily disturbed their long-possessed cache! The old bunk in the corner was a mass of nests, the rotted Yukon stove rust-eaten to the elements. But far the strangest thing about this ancient wilderness home was its window. The dim light filtered through a strangely colored prism and caught in little flecks upon the floor, in spotted pattern. I went to look, and saw then its peculiar fashioning. The window was made

of two rows of bottles placed alternating neck and base, and at one time no doubt had been chinked to keep out draughts, though this rough "leading" had long since fallen off. Here was true pioneering ingenuity, surely—a window of double glass with air-space in between, perfect for a cold winter. And winters can be long as well as cold, here in the narrow valleys between the monstrous hills. That great wall of the continent rising to the south, shuts out the winter sun entirely from Thanksgiving to mid-January.

How steep those hills were, for my unaccustomed legs! Steep as a horse's hoof, and on the infrequent level spots the niggerheads of burned off areas (rough black grass tussocks set in marshy hollows) were even harder going. As we returned at dusk from over some far slope and almost literally slid down to Fannie's side-hill home, the little flock of cabins there that formed their wilderness claim looked mighty welcome. After I had rested, I would try my legs out carefully to see if they could ever be used again—and found they could, with care! Fannie unwearied and bustling about supper-getting, would laugh at me and my exhaustion, while I grinned back with one side of my face.

"When me and Joe is starting on a prospect trip or hunt, that long-legged scantlin' Joe traipses the hills so steady he runs the breath clean out of me. But I am into camp in time to cook the grub, you bet! I step right on his snow shoes when I get my second wind, and snow shoes ain't no ballet slippers neither, woman, and blisters on your hoof from snow-shoe lacing can be a might of set-back. My pack was all bumps, that day, and I had to stop and mend my bellows, often.

"Once I got lost, and had to take to clawing blueberries from the bushes, like a bear. And once I shot a grizzly, 'long near dark, and when I got him skinned out, 'long came snow and it was too far off to make it into camp that night, anyhow. So I think, 'Well, old bear, this thick hide kept *you* warm a-plenty, several years. Guess it can keep *me* warm, one night.' So I wrapped up in it—warm yet, just skinned, you know—and slept sound. When I got in next morning, my own dogs nearly ate me up! I was all bear grease and blood, head to foot, from that fresh hide! Looked pretty tough. Say, the pups never did get over smelling me! Good joke on them. Joe don't like to have me tell about that night. Thinks it wasn't ladylike! Shucks—I wasn't aiming to sleep ladylike. I was hunting.

"Did you notice, this afternoon—that time you was a half-mile trailing back of me—the dogs all looking straight up at that bluff? I waved to you, but you was studying your shoe-pacs! It was a red fox they had seen—a beauty, too. I didn't dare to holler to you, or it wouldn't be there no longer. And say, woman, did I tell you about the green balloon come floating over here last eighth July? It had green letters on it, and a long yellow tail; and though it rid high up, it looked from here 'bout like a fifty-gallon keg. It went south. I wonder where it came from. Some Fourth of July celebration, somewhere. I saw once in a paper, came with wrapping, a child's balloon had travelled seventeen-fifty miles. I'd like to 've read the letters on this one I saw, but I couldn't make 'em out even with the glasses—she spun around so with the eddies in the wind, there in the canyon.

—"Come on now, pull those long and near-to-

busted legs of yourn offen that bed and wrap yourself about some good hot chuck. Legs ain't everything to living! And say, did I tell you what that fellow from the Smithsonian was telling me—the one was here last summer what I told you of? We was discussing dogs and wolves, and how the pupil of their eyes is circular, whether dilated or contracted. *You* know. Well, in a cat it's vertical—a slit up and down. That's because they are climbers, he says. And grazers, like horses, has horizontal pupils, to give 'em a wide vision. That's sense, now, ain't it? I've thought of that, a heap. We swapped a-plenty of such talk. Nice fellow, but weak legged, like you! Never mind—you got here, glory be! And you'll come back some day, like as not in one of these new-fangled airypplanes. I'd like to see how one would look, settlin' down upon the long bar there, on Moose Creek. Say, *that* would be a way to travel and save leg cracks!"

These are a few of all the books in running brooks, "over Kantishna way," which Fannie Quigley opened to me. But of them all, she was herself the most dramatic page. Consider the intelligence and foresight which must go into ordering *all* one's groceries and mine supplies just once a year! That is real shopping. Everything Fannie and Joe need must be freighted from the railroad in the winter, a hundred miles by dog sled and at twelve cents a pound. But because she has lived in the midst of the Alaska hills ever since early Dawson days, she finds it just as easy to order a dozen cases of "tin cow" at once, as you or I to order a quart of milk left on our doorstep regularly of a morning. Yet, if a *Heralds' College* were to design a crest for Fannie—which she deserves—there would be on it *Ovis*

*Dalli* rampant, I am sure, the ranger above timber. And for a motto, Montaigne's lovely line, so true of Fannie, "*Je ne fay rien sans gayeté*;" for she, too, can do nothing without blitheness.

"Any newspaper not more than two months old seems mighty fresh to us," Fannie is saying. "We take a couple days off in the fall and can get all the caribou we want for a year's supply. Or moose or sheep. And the meat keeps fine in the back of Joe's tunnels, for the hills are always frozen inside. Any of the root things from my garden, or cabbage, or berries, (or apples, which we have sent in) will keep until they're eaten up, back in the tunnel. Electric ice-box? Say, I've heard of them. They must be nice for city folks, but we don't need 'em. By letting in or shutting out the air, we keep *our* ice-box at just the temperature we want, above or below freezing. Some meat I salt down. Some I cook and put away all sealed in its own fat, and pile up in the tunnel, below freezing. Frost tenders it. And in the winter when Joe's busy at his quartz work, then I hitch up the pups and take a passiar down to the timber there on Moose Creek, cut me out some trees, and haul 'em back up to the cabin.

"Who saws 'em into stove wood? Woman, Joe and I are pardners. His job is there, to work the mine, and mine's the rest of it!"

But sometimes Joe and Fannie come to Our Town. They may mush over through the winter hills, but often now they will fly back by plane. Joe's first trip in by plane, however, nearly proved his last. There was no regular landing-field then, in the Kantishna, but Quigley told the pilot that there was a fine long gravel bar along Moose Creek just below the cabin, and 'our Alaska pilots, always willing to

blaze out new trails, consented to chance it. They overshot the bar, however, and Fannie saw and heard the crash—the first she knew of Joe's latest "flier."

"Joe walked over," as she tells it, "but coming back he wanted some fresh air, and so he hired an airplane! They was only 80 minutes coming in from Fairbanks. It was four o'clock in the morning. I heard a roaring noise, so out of bed I go, and before I could get anything on I hear a crash . . . I look out. . . . Here they are, right on their nose . . . tail of the plane right in the air, in Moose Creek. I got an ax and down I go, but before I got there they all three of them got out. All I could see was blood.

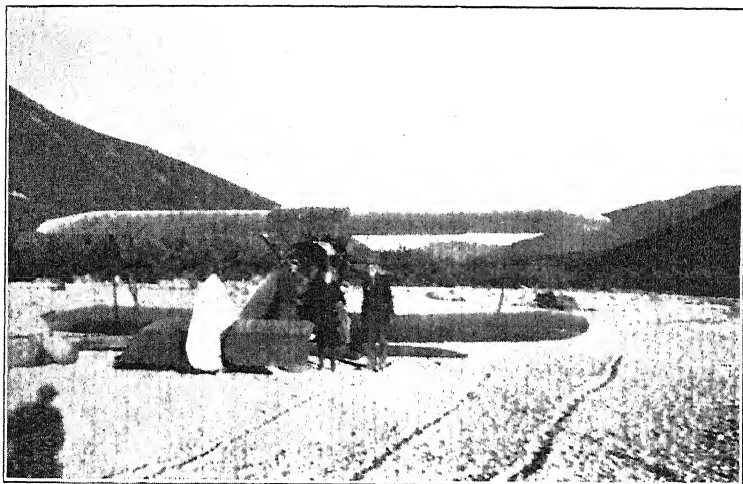
"Joe's nose was split down right in two, from right eye to his left tooth. And all I had was salt and iodine! You could see all the bone on his face. But I sew it up. I put in nine stitches. It was hard to keep clean, inside, but it got well all right. It was no fun, I tell you. No doctor and no way to get him. Plane was a wreck. Crosson and Ed Young were the pilots, and they were not hurt much. But everything came out all right."

Things do, with Fannie, gamest product of our big game North.

Last twenty-first of May Joe was working in his hard-rock tunnel, four miles from home, coming back Saturdays and going up on Mondays. Each Wednesday Fannie carried him some fresh-baked food. That day she found him lying on the floor of the blacksmith shop, where he had dragged himself—his left leg broken near the hip and his right shoulder smashed and paralyzed from the fall of a ton-and-a-half of rock. Fannie ran for help—those too, too scattered baker's dozen neighbors, miles dis-



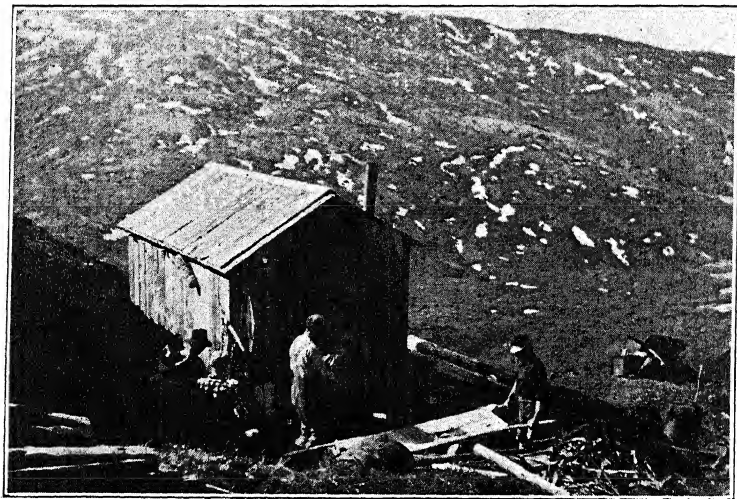
NEAR COPPER MOUNTAIN.



FANNIE WISHED TO SEE AN AIRPLANE LAND SOME DAY ON MOOSE CREEK. HERE IT IS!



"MEN OF THE KANTISHNA GATHERED TO BRING JOE HOME."



THE BLACKSMITH SHOP AT THE TUNNEL WHERE FANNIE FOUND JOE  
AFTER THE CAVE-IN.



tant—and in three hours all the Kantishna had arrived. They put splints on his leg, but it was broken so high up the splints did little good. By June second they had sent word out to Fairbanks and a plane came for him; but he was in our hospital until September twenty-fourth and Fannie carried on alone, through all of those agonizing months.

Joe wrote me on December twentieth: "It was pretty near all off, that time, with old Joe! I must try to get to work now, soon, or I might get to like this invalid business." And Fannie writes, "They got his leg set three inches too long, and he can't put his arm up to his head. I have to rub his arm and leg an hour every night and morning, and do all work now, for he can't even cut wood. So everything is up to me. Joe is getting along very good. He walks about eight miles every day."

Of all that time she was alone, she adds simply this word: "I don't know what I would have done if it hadn't been for the dogs. We got four now. I had good garden—lettuce heads like cabbage—nice strawberries and so many all kinds berries. And I got big moose, dressed about eight hundred pounds. It was very fat. And some good fat caribou—one white like sheep. They will have road to Copper Mountain next fall. They have the telephone there now. Went down six miles to-day for some meat I killed. Then I have about fifteen cords wood to haul, so you see when night comes I am tired.

"Well, my dear, will close. It is twelve and I must go to bed. Good night. Wish I could see you to-night. God bless you. Your friend, Fannie."



# THE THLINGIT

KAH-TLYUDT  
RED PASSING  
BRONZE INTO SILVER



## KAH-TLYUDT

“THE Islands of the North lie in the midst of icy waters.” So spake the ancient People of the South, inhabiting the Middle Lands. “Strange monsters of gigantic size and horrid shape dwell in those Seas. Strange amber treasure washes on those fearful shores—but who would seek it there? A people of the gray sea and the oak-black forest dwell within, wrapped in the extra-manifold earth-ended darkness amongst the fogs and rains of those inhospitable Northlands, barbarian and kin only to that gray beast named the Wolf of Weald.

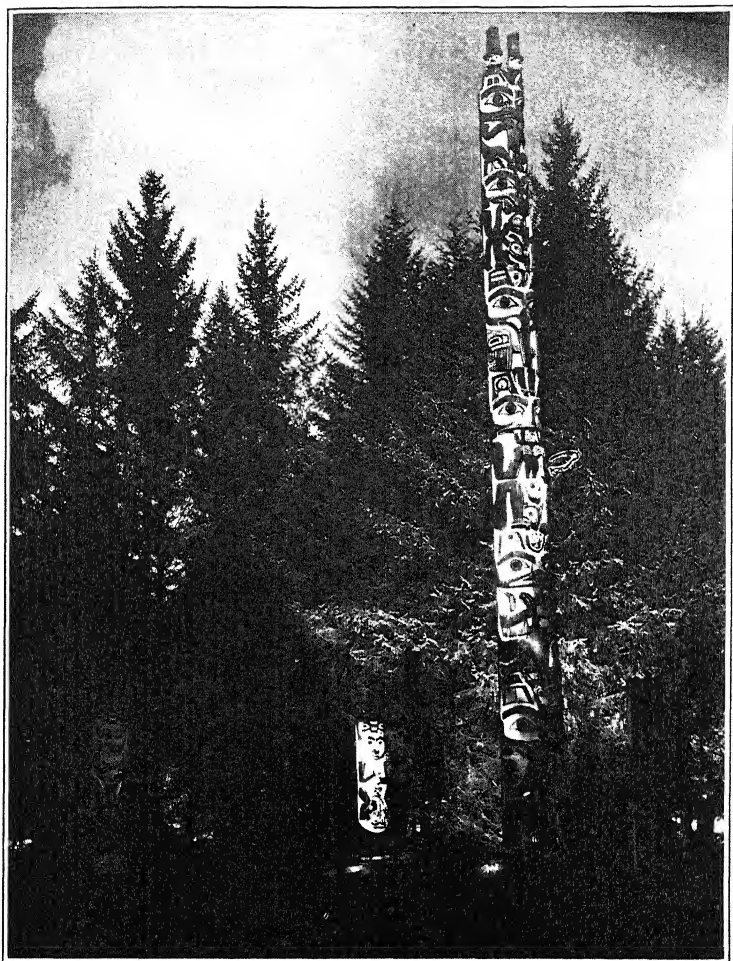
“They build enduring monuments of stone thrust into Earth—their meaning strange to us—out there upon the outer fringe of the Lands’ Circle. They are of constant-warring and of diverse tribes, but skilled in metal-work and woodcraft. Their priesthood practise magic arts of medicine and sorcery, barbarian rites, and teach a secret lore of strange metempsychosis. Their art-craft is fantastic treatment of animal form, in which they genuinely delight and which has meaning to them, though to our cultured eyes it verily doth seem grotesque. Magicians and diviners hold great sway amongst these barbarous people, are counted wise men, intermediaries with the spirit world. To us, of the walled cities of the South, they seem at best as children, dwelling in the magic childhood of the human race.”

These spokesmen were of an all-conquering people, establishers of world-wide empire—empire of

might and knowledge and the sum of human greatness in their day. East and South their conquering march had run, annexing various continental lands. West and North the course of empire swung, until it met the margin of the Western Sea and faced at last across the narrow straits, into the barbarous Northern Islands. A metal, dull and heavy in the Earth but quick in use and bright to burnish, lay hidden in the North. The Empire Builders sought it there—took it by might of number and by weight of skill, from your long-distant Celtic kin and mine—to add the silvery tin of Britain's Cornwall to the bronze shields of Roman legionaries: destroying Druid power, though Stonehenge stands to-day, mute witness to a glory now departed.

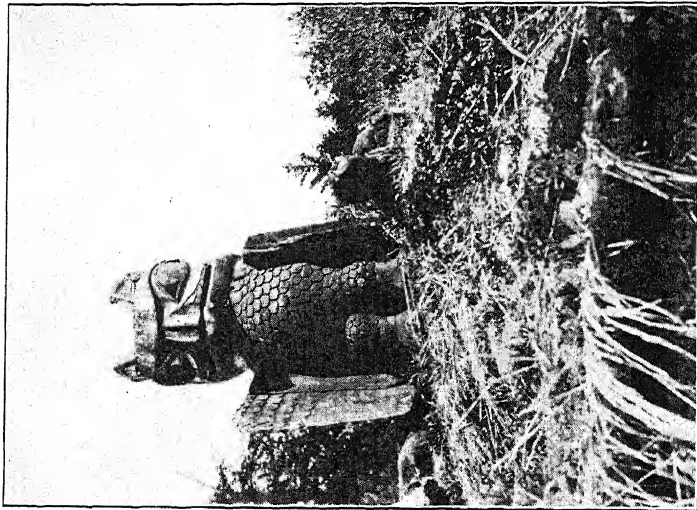
—"The Islands of the North lie in the midst of icy waters." So spoke but yesterday the People of the South, inhabiting the Middle Lands of our America. "Strange monsters of gigantic size and horrid shape—seals, walruses and whales—sport in those Seas. Perhaps strange amber-colored treasure washes upon those frozen shores—but who would seek it there? A people of the gray sea and the shaggy cedar-black dim forest dwell within, wrapped in the extra-manifold sub-Arctic darkness amongst the fogs and rains of those inhospitable Northlands, barbarian and kin only to that gray beast named the Wolf of Weald.

"They build enduring monuments of cedar-wood thrust into Earth—their meaning strange to us—out there upon the outer fringe of the Lands' Circle. They are of constant-warring and of diverse tribes, but skilled in metal-work and woodcraft. Their shamans practise magic arts of medicine and sorcery, barbarian rites, and teach a secret lore of strange



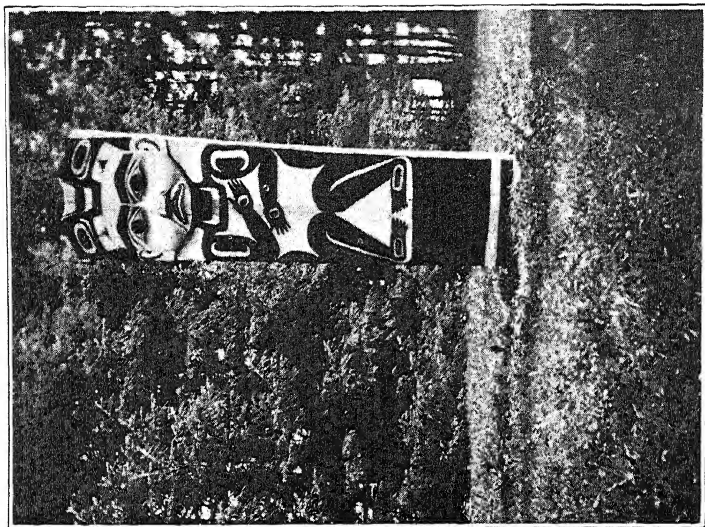
*Photograph by Fisher, Ketchikan.*

**"THEY BUILD ENDURING MONUMENTS OF CEDAR WOOD THRUST  
INTO EARTH—THEIR MEANING STRANGE TO US."**



*Photograph by Thucrites.*

"THEIR ART-CRAFT IS FANTASTIC TREATMENT OF ANIMAL FORM,  
CARVED AND PAINTED UPON THEIR TOTEMS."





metempsychosis. Their art-craft is fantastic treatment of animal form, in which they genuinely delight—carving and painting such upon their totems—which have a meaning to them, though to our culture and sophistication these seem grotesque. Magicians and diviners hold great sway amongst these pagan people, are counted wise men, intermediaries with the spirit world. To us, of the walled cities of the South, they seem at best as children, dwelling in the magic childhood of the human race.”

These spokesmen of to-day are of the now all-conquering Anglo-Saxon people, establishers of world-wide empire—empire of might and knowledge and the sum of human greatness in our day. To East and South our conquering march has run, annexing various continental sections of America. Then West and North the course of empire swept, until it met the margin of the Western Sea and looked at last across the narrow straits up to the “barbarous” Northern Islands of Southeast Alaska. A metal, dull and heavy in the Earth but quick in use and bright to burnish, lay hidden in the North. The Empire Builders of to-day have sought it there—we, the descendants of those British Celts have taken it, by might of number and by weight of skill, to add the pale gold of the Arctic Lands to the strong coffers of our Uncle Sam: destroying Shaman power, though the rich-painted totems stand to-day, mute witness to a glory now departed.

Sometimes the most precious meat of truth lies in the kernel of a parable—“an bispel,” as our Saxon forebears called it, because the greater meaning lay there in the unspoken. Sometimes through history we can extend our memories beyond the personal breadth and back into beginnings of recurrent story:

see the Barbarian of to-day become the conquering Empire Builder of to-morrow: through the imagination's aid, encompass cyclic generations and weave the cloak of Time in a design of meaning.

Those native tribes of Gaul and Britain vastly preferred—as you or I would surely have preferred, in their place—to keep their own simplicity of culture, well tested, rather than grasp at any dubious benefits which Rome conferred. “But Rome gave them no choice, and Rome herself *had* no choice.” You can not say to-day—I surely could not—this world would have been either happier or better if Rome had never spread beyond the Tiber, or if a continent which now supports its hundred millions of supposedly self-governing people had been left to the scant half million of “barbarians” who gained subsistence in America four hundred years ago. On the large scale of history, “we are confronted by problems that the ethics of the individual fail to solve,” says Adams. “The Indian in the American forest, the Polynesian in his sunny isle, share in the moral enigma of their passing, the mystery of the vanished races of man and brute, which have gone down in the struggle for existence in geologic or historic ages in what, one would fain believe, is a universe governed by moral law.”

But what of those proud spirits who stand to-day with backs against the forest wall, refusing to go down? With out-thrust jaw and clenched fist meeting the legionary of a modern Rome with level eye, demanding: “What is the best that you can offer me, in fair exchange for all I must give up of old sweet mythos, should I forego my proper dowry of native hope and fear, belief and disbelieving, and join with your new way that opens out anew, for

worse or better? I pay for it with my life's service—but I demand your *best* ere I surrender all I know is *good*."

—I've told you many little stories of Alaskans of to-day: men who have given richly to the North in sacrifice, by coming—who help spread out the swarming empire and are intent on stretching further all the northward-leading roads, to make the land our own. "Athens built walls. Athens shut out the barbarians. Rome built roads. Rome overcame the barbarian by making him Roman." Our way is Rome's way. But there is second and recursant face even to Cæsar's coin, when open-minded people turn it over thoughtfully and see that civilization's march can never be achieved on earth without the incident of personal grief and wreckage, old memories that must mar the actual triumph, the wounds of those "barbarian" people who oppose the on-march and are conquered. It's a peculiar problem, this old tragedy of conquest, because societies of human folk have not to this day learned, in spite of Virgil's epic, how to be civilized without being also cruel.

What is the story of those others, who have lost *their* North with coming of us Whites? What of the men and women of this land for whom our coming meant the loss of best possession?—Not the material thing alone, though much loss came there, too: but loss in flower of spirit, rooted culture, in which they found completed satisfaction before we burst in with our discord? To Virgil's mind, as ours, no turning back seems possible. To him, as us, it seemed so obviously better to organize the world than leave it in disorder. "If we believe in our civilization, ought we not to spread it? If sanitation and hygiene are desirable, should we not build water-

works and hospitals, and whatever goes with them? If we are comforted by our religion, should we not carry it to the heathen? Yet the city which displaces the simple and primitive life will be less beautiful than the country. The soul of the heathen may be saved, but incidentally his character will frequently be ruined. He may accept our civilization, but he will probably lose his own; and sometimes the loss is more than he can survive."

So says John Erskine, and so think we who see again the Romans marching upon Britain, a conquering flood in our own day. It's easier to brush aside the problem than to face it, and few do face it. But if we happen to have watched the edged tool cut deep down into the lives of our own dear-loved friends of that so-called barbarian race—looked on at crises, struggles, deeds of heroism, dénouements, which mark the solving of those problems of transition as one passes through that agonizing no-man's-land of dubious twilight between the thane-ship of thy God and mine—then we shall guess how deep within the sensitized flesh is dented by that silver-pointed pencil, how hidden lie the true foundations whose altitude the spirit sometimes touches. When the *Yets-haida gai*, The Iron Men, came—the people of Alaska's Northern Islands faced a problem we, mercifully, ourselves never have been forced to solve. Our ancestors of two millennia ago in Britain knew it, and long bore the ancient wrong about them. But could we ourselves have met it, with sorrow that is knowledge, with wisdom that is power? Could you and I have sworn as Brythwold thane of Byrthnoth made his oath upon the shaken war-field of Maldon? Men of Northland—marred by javelin, amid the gathering of spears, the wres-

ting of weapons, the cloven shield-wall of the lindenwood, hewed with the hammered brands—swore there: "*Mind shall the harder be, heart the keener, mood the greater, as our might lessens.*"

Such was the oath, such the self-conquest Kah-tlyudt made—Kah-tlyudt meaning "Highly Esteemed." Of all who safely walked that bridge hung perilous from one life-mode across to other, this woman of the Thlingit seems to me most perfect because most proud, most open-eyed, complete in knowing both the whence and whither. In her own span she has completely lived two cultures as opposite, as different, as incompatible, as any you could well imagine. Yet in the new she never lost the peace of her old self, through all the tumult of the change. She is not self-deluded. She sees the civilizations twain as she completely knows them, baited cages as all man-made cultures are to trap the soul with fancied meat. The old life had its bars, its bait. So has the new. Yet she who blew on bronze has learned to breathe through silver and create a new and sweeter music, without loss or a forgetting of the simpler keynote.

In her one life she slipped from one full set of values to another. If sweeter music can be breathed through silver, then she will learn to play on silver, masterly. Such was her decision. Though muted bronze will never lose its quality and usage, clear notes in silver through a wider range will be perfected—even though silver notes that sound so sweetly clear to-day, were possible only through fire-heat and the melt of mental anguish, through change and flux and perturbation, the hiss of solid form that vanishes in those hot fires, the loss of something cast and molded, the gain of something recast and re-

molded. How and why? There lies the virtuosity. One who in mettle can emerge from such a test, fire-tried and ringing true, is worth our knowing—and not one but many chapters of the Northland's story.

It was the battle year of 1864 when Hoon-t'-ut, a Thlingit woman of the Wrangell tribe, gave birth to a girl child. The baby's father named the little thing Matilda, as he had named her older sister Margaret; for James Kinnon was Scotch factor of the Hudson Bay Company at the old trading post of Victoria on Vancouver Island, the first of all the Northern Islands. But the child's Thlingit name was Kah-tlyudt. There was much travel and much trade between the Thlingit of Southeast Alaska and those more southern British posts, and many Thlingit permanently settled in Victoria. Hoon-t'-ut had lived there several years.

When the new child was less than one year old, however, the Fates began to weave her changing life pattern. Hoon-t'-ut learned by some chance that Scotch James Kinnon planned to take the babies from her and send them back home to his British kin, to rear and educate. All apart from natural mother-love, as real in Thlingit heart as any other, this action would have run athwart one of the very strongest—perhaps the very strongest—tradition of her Thlingit people. What to a white mother of that mid-Victorian day might have seemed pity and a heart-break, but not a father's unreasonable demand or wish, broke sharp across the whole Thlingit social code, ethic and morality. The Northern Island People held with jealous firm tenacity, not only to the very "advanced" notion that a woman is the master of her own body and gives it only at her own consent, but to the inbred belief that children

all belong to *mother's* people, are hers completely who has borne them, and their upbringing lies entirely under the control of her side of the family, *her* brothers and *her* kin. A Thlingit child not only does not belong to his father, to do with as he will, but he is actually considered *no kin* to his father's people, relationship being traced exclusively upon the mother's side. A Thlingit speaking of his father's brother will say, "He is my father's clansman." Of his own son he says, "He is a child whom I have made"—not, "He is *my* child." So you can see that, to James Kinnon's Thlingit wife, his contemplated action seemed not only cruel, unthinking and ungracious, but literally a sin and crime against the high code of The People. In her eyes it placed him utterly beyond the pale of civilization, broke all the bonds between them, and left her free for direct act according to her own unaided highest wisdom—the great tradition of the Island People.

A kinsman of her own was with a Thlingit party trading in Victoria. With simple outfit and a single small canoe they stole secretly away by night from the new-corporated British city, taking the two tiny children with them. Alone they paddled those long six hundred miles of waterway between the seven thousand islands, through the rough waters and past sometimes treacherous mountain wall of coastline, up to the old home village at the mouth of Stikine River. To-day you slip through these land-locking channels in turbined steamers, and the way seems all too short and beautiful beyond description: The cobalt water twisting through the threaded islands, the mist arising from dark valleys seen at early dawn, the spilling streams that like a downward smoke fall in thin-dropping veils, the giant cedars overgrown

with green, the fronds of coral-like kelp drifting with the tides upon the rust-brown rocks, the knee-deep cushioned mosses, still water green as uncut emerald or shadowed into new-blown lilac—and in the hollows of wind-driven hills, snow glistening in sun like glints of flame. Lovelier than any word to tell, is summer passage of our inland sea.

But all the glorious green archipelago was to the lonely woman but the way of fugitive, from an inhuman alien mode of keen injustice. This passing was to be a break forever with that other code, which crashed against the very bonds of body. Her children (so she prayed to some Red hoary sea-god and paddled to exhaustion, praying) should never know White cruelty, White lack in understanding and in honor. If her own agony of soul and body could now buy it, her children were to know only the good way of her people, should be forever Thlingit. Haste, then, and do not wait the friendly tides but dare them, dangerously! Who knows what inexplicable hard vengeance may drive behind, swift-paddling in pursuit?—Apparently James Kinnon made no attempt to follow, though; and in the later years Matilda Kinnon could find no trace there in Victoria of her father. But when on nearing Wrangell the fugitive Hoon-t'-ut saw ice-cakes and the tiny bergs rush down swift current, broken from the glacier there above, the woman of The North met them as friendly greeting. The myriad ravens—Yehl, master of her clan and totem—rode the mad ice-pack in loud witch-stick whirr of salutation, black wings aflash between the glistening ice-prongs. In this moist temperate climate of the Islands (which might have seemed even to Scotch James Kinnon “a wee hair too wet”)—washed by the warm Pacific



winds and currents—the fugitive found friendly home.

Mother and her two babies were given refuge in the household of Chief Snook of Nani-ayi—same family as head-chief Shaksh of the Wrangell people. Hoon-t'-ut did not live long after her adventurous home-coming, whether from heart-break or from broken body I do not know. But these Indian people knew the strongest loyalties and ties of hospitality and trust. To them, adoption is as real as blood, and baby Kah-tlyudt was adopted now as Snook's own child. Adoption is an immemorial Indian custom; whole tribes could be adopted into one another. You may remember how the Tuscarora were adopted by the Five Nations, thus becoming Six. As the Oneida spokesman said that day in 1726, the Tuscarora came "as nursling still sheathed to the cradle-board. We have set up for ourselves a cradle-board in the extended house," a baby member of the family, literally new-born. Adoption was to the Amerindian what naturalization means to us—adoption here, by fiction of a law, serving to change not only personality but the political status of the adopted person. I've heard, as child, a dimly remembered story of two very distant kinswomen of my own, sisters captured by the Senecas and adopted by them—but one into the Heron Clan and one into the Deer, so that they were considered ever after of *different* blood and their children could intermarry.

But a feast of adoption must be given, a ceremony fitting the high honor of the donor, to proclaim to far and near what had been done, and why. Preparations for such a feast were undertaken, the invitations were sent scattering through the Islands. These great events were commonly called "potlatch" in

the Chinook jargon, the lingua Franca of the Coast. The word itself came from the Nootka *patshatl*, meaning "a giving." During such festival, held for so many causes, houses and carved poles would be raised, chiefs' children be initiated into secret orders, and the exchange of many gifts take place—all manner of richness and largess, but loveliest of all the fine-etched copper plates which were such use and treasure to the Island People. The tribal chiefs would unpack from the great carved wooden chests their ceremonial clubs and batons which were the badges of their office, their most elaborately carved pipes, their deep-fringed exquisitely woven Chilkat blankets or Raven hat, sign of the family headship. Kah-tlyudt's own robe of sable skins must be made ready, and the Frog-design blanket. For Kah-tlyudt was of Raven Phratry, Frog emblem, Kiks-uddy clan, Tee-Hit-Ton family, Wrangell tribe, and Thlingit nation! A rather lengthy set of names for one small maid to wear, and surely needing a Heralds' College to unlimber all the branches of such a multifurcate family tree! But to climb in nimble memory throughout all the far-spread branches of one's mother's family tree was an essential part of Thlingit training and Kah-tlyudt has been reared with an aristocratic care. She traces them with the zest and ease an "F. F. V." will show in tracking down a twenty-second cousinship! A year or so ago, Grandmother Kah-tlyudt easily ran back five generations on her mother's side (the only side that "counts"), tracing for us her kinship to a certain person. I think she can go back interminably and rolling off her tongue such awful names, too—or they sound so to our softer southern ears. A Thlingit name is rarely euphonism, according to our notion.

Of course the name of Wrangell came after 1805 with Russian occupation, just as old British place-names often became *castra* and then Chester. Before the Russian time her tribe had called themselves Shkut-quam or Stikeen-quam—the People of the Stikine River. Related up and down the length of coast, the story of this family name runs like a fine-drawn thread of copper wire to bind the Red with White, the old with new.

The powerful Snook, her ideal foster-father in so many ways, summoned a famous artist to design and carve Kah-tlyudt's own totem-pole. A slave was chosen to be set free in her honor. Supplies of Hudson Bay blankets were laid by, in generous quantity, to be distributed as gifts to all the guests.—To those of us who know and love the Saxon epics I think that nothing is so potlatch-reminiscent in our own old tribal story, as their constant telling of the rich gifts given thanes by earls; for “gift,” and always richer and reiterant gift, is a word one could place with “sea” and “sword” as an assured key to the Saxon temper, Saxon heart. You will remember the fine word of Wid-sith:

“ Thus far I travelled through strange lands, and learnt  
Of good and evil in the spacious world;  
Parted from home-friends and dear kindred, far  
The ways I followed. Therefore I can sing  
And tell a tale, recount in mead-hall  
How men of high race gave rich gifts to me.”

Here was the very soul of *patshatl*: the social crime of keeping and not sharing, if one had enough or much; the largess of the Saxon then, as Thlingit now, the symbol of an inner noble largeness.

With feast of giving, small Kah-tlyudt was raised to her high caste. In symbol, the wee child was seated high upon the up-piled blankets gathered to be given—sober and big-eyed and sedate there. And so, with all the solemn ceremony of which the Thlingit is past master, with all his love of form and color, his rhythm and his song, his fun and jest and royal hospitality, with all formality and dignity and civic ritual, James Kinnon's daughter became the daughter of the Thlingit Chief at Wrangell. "The taint of white blood," so the people said, "is now wiped out, forever."

Who were the Thlingit? A people of the sea and forest, equally. Like *Innuít* and *Tinneh* and *Haida*, the word Thlingit also means "the people" or "the men." When a tribe comes to recognize itself as a real unit, then very often it will call itself a term with such a meaning—all other folk being considered outlanders! Maybe it was exactly this too tribal way of thinking, at which old Job was taking pokes of solemn satire when he remarked to Zophar the Naamathite: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you!"

The People of the Islands, Thlingit and Haida, were master builders both of boats and houses, and both boat and house were made from his own heavy cedar forests. The structural genius of this people, if applied to stone instead of wood, surely would have placed them among the greatest builders of all America. Large houses built of massive logs and rich in architectural detail, painted and carved, rose from the island shores above the sheltered coves. They looked to sea and land for fish and game, were traders and exporters all up and down the coast, bought and captured and sold slaves of lesser races,

suggested the Phœnician in their combination of fine seamanship and active trade, lived when at home in settled villages (unlike the Tinneh Athapascan), and always laid great stress on rank and caste, family and honor, tradition and the *obligation* implicit in nobility. If you should hear of them as they once were, before they had been forced to take on some of our White ways and give up many of their own, you will be forced to wonder, as I often do, what stuff of "civilization" we have sold them half so precious as what the Thlingit lost, through our own coming North.

It was into the family of a great leader of this people—leadership not hereditary but won by merit—the child once named Matilda Kinnon was adopted, and all her earliest memories are of a family love and family care. The Chief was utterly devoted to her, so much so that he made the child his everyday and almost constant company. Her great dark eyes and lighter skin than other children of the town made her outstanding, from the first. She had real beauty, not a childish prettiness; and time has deepened, not erased it.

Kah-tlyudt was given the characteristic rearing of the high-caste Thlingit child, in the old manner. No high-caste Thlingit girl-child ever worked, for there were slaves for that: hence those small hands and dainty feet. Much of her education was in behavior and in morals, the strict social code, the strictest ethic. The hereditary hunting and fishing grounds of the Nani-ayi family lay up the lovely Stikine valley, a land of streams through which the river seaward flows; and she was taken regularly there each spring and summer to the holiday village on the banks of this inland water. It was a district famous

for its grizzlies and the Chief was a great hunter, a powerful man physically.

Although the youngster was her foster-father's almost shadow, yet grizzly hunts were no place for a girl-child! One day she saw him making preparation for a bear hunt and cried and begged to go along. He humored her, and made believe that he had given up his plans for going; then, when a chance came, he slipped away unnoticed. But he left in such hurry, so that he would not hurt the small child's feelings, that he forgot his bear-spear.

Perhaps you think a spear not needed when a man carries a gun, as Snook did—a long muzzle-loader Hudson Bay. Usually he carried three weapons on a hunting trip: a knife which he wore in his belt, a short spear, and the gun. The method was to shoot the bear first, but those ancient Hudson Bay guns seldom *killed* a grizzly; then as the monster rushed to charge, the man would stand to meet it and deliver a sure spear-thrust as the great claw-stretched brute arose to maul and grapple with the hunter. But Snook would not return this day to get his spear, lest his dear child should see him and he could not break from her again. A picture that, to my mind: The mighty hunter, unafraid of those great grizzly iron-clawed arms at end of only a short home-made spear, but so soft hearted he could not endure the sight of childish tears and disappointment! *That* for the Savage heart, my kinsmen of the Southlands!

Snook's nephew who went with him carried a rifle also, but no spear; for only tested heroes met the grizzly so, with death-thrust. They went up Stikine River and then separated. Only a short time after, Snook discovered a big grizzly lying almost beside him on the ground there—but whether dead or

merely playing dead he was not certain. He watched, with every hunter's sense alert and focused. There was no move. He sent his little dog in, to worry the great beast; and then he saw the tiniest twitch of paw, instinctive in spite of all the animal's shrewd clever play-act. The man realized that he must cross to other side, if he would get a sure death-shot; but as he stooped to pass under a small swamp-pine, the bear rose suddenly and leaped on him!

Snook quickly turned, thrust rifle toward the bear in hopes that he might hit a vital spot, pulled trigger—and scored a clean miss, for the bullet passed *under* the bear's forearm. "Oh for my good *spear* now!" he cried. Then bear and man met there and grappled, unarmed man and the massy steel-claw beast in horrid and inhuman and unequal wrestling.

The hunter, out of olden lore of forest people, knew one spot—only one, in such a struggle—where grizzly strength was vulnerable. The little, short, fine ears of the great head are *Ursus*' quick nerve-centers. His eyes are poor, his spinal column cased in triplicate armor. But those two delicate and sensitive ears of the great jaw-thrust-open head, Snook grasped as the *Horribilis One* charged in and, with the superhuman strength of desperation, he pulled down with a giant tug the grizzly head, down almost to the ground. He tried in vain to hold it there with one arm, in that precarious ear-grip, while with the other hand in frantic haste he reached for his short hunting-knife stuck in his belt. But in the struggle, his blanket hunting-shirt had slipped and covered up the knife. He could not reach it. Again he grasped both ears and fought and struggled like a madman there, to push those awful jaws down. But he could

only hold the head closer against his leg; and though he thrust so hard the beast could not slash with its teeth, it gnawed and scratched the flesh so that the blood flowed from the wound in streams, and strength was quickly going.

The nephew heard the awful struggle and came running back, but dared not shoot for the two bodies were too closely wrestled. At last, in knowledge that his strength was almost gone, Snook gave a mighty desperate heave, threw the bear from him and himself leaped backward over a large log and lay, sprawled utterly exhausted, upon the other side of it. The nephew closed in then and placed a well directed shot which killed the grizzly. Kah-tlyudt, though she had missed this nearly tragic hunt, was taken up the river to see the great bear as it still lay on the ground there; and that huge skin was known to men all over our Alaska—and is, to many an oldster, to this day—"The bear *with ears pulled out*, and hanging like a dog's!"

Sometimes the little Kah-tlyudt went to visit her mother's family the Tee-Hit-Ton, or Cedar Bark Town people. Their hereditary holdings were on the northern end of Prince of Wales Island, from Thorne Bay to Point Baker. Their chief summer village was in the lovely little spot now called Salmon Bay, a fish-stream with a hinterland then rich in beaver pelts. She loves to tell of the large village there, where people dried red salmon for the winter feasts. To-day only a few broken corner-posts of all those many houses, some piled-up rocks of Indian fish-traps, remain to mark the site.

During long winter evenings she sat for hours and listened to old legends of The Thlingit, told by her foster-parents. Snook had been an early friend of



the white people and had in his possession a curious medal bearing the mystic letters *M M*. This rested in a velvet case and there was also a spell-making document that went with it. These had been given Snook, long years before the child's day, by the captain of some sailing ship he had befriended. It was a "skookum paper," in the Chinook jargon, because any white man to whom Snook showed the paper and the emblem, always afterward accorded him the utmost respect.

Once, when they had been trading in Victoria, Snook's nephew killed a Flathead Indian and was sentenced to be hanged. In Thlingit eyes the boy had done no very serious wrong, for Flatheads were a tribe from which the Thlingit bought or captured slaves! But British justice saw with different eyes, was sure and swift. As last resort, the Chief carried his jewel, his paper, and the velvet case straight to the Governor, Lord Douglas—who read the paper, stayed the execution, and sent Snook and his nephew both away in secret and at night. A *hi-yu skookum* paper, truly! I'm sorry that I cannot tell you what was written on it: what patent of nobility and character from some old British war-ship or Boston whaler; what tale of kindness shown by bronze-skinned stranger in some deep desperate plight of seamen. But fire destroyed it shortly after Snook's own death and long ago the magic emblem has been cut in two for dancing earrings, though these are still kept in possession of Matilda's family.

However friendly Snook had once been to The Whites, he saw the trouble following on their coming—none clearer. He saw the degradation of the women taken by the white men, he saw debauchery that came with "lum" imported by the fur trade

(No Thlingit could say "rum." The R-sound is too hard for him), he saw contagion and disease spread through his village, he saw the gradual but sure decline of power among his Thlingit people. Accordingly, he bitterly opposed adopting any white-man customs.

A Tsimpsean named Philip McKay had begun to preach the Christian creed to Wrangell people, and opened school to teach them how to read the Bible. Snook held himself aloof from this, refusing to allow any member of his family to come in contact with "the new way." Especially for his own beautiful adopted daughter, he had quite other plans than that she marry some white man such as those he saw in Wrangell now, and follow in their way of sure destruction, so ill befitting a woman of her breeding.

The "white way" was a plague, an evil thing, abomination and demoralization. The old Chief looked upon it, through his wisdom and the wisdom of his people. It was not good. And so his child remained, though grown to marriageable age now, as ignorant of white-man custom and belief as though she lived in quite another world—a sheltered world, of love and care and peace and also beauty. The Haida-Thlingit civilization—simple, rooted, stable when left alone to flower in its own Northern Islands—had generated forms of loveliness on which the eye and mind of art collectors rest to-day and are prone long to linger, when some rare salvage of that once so daily common beauty is glimpsed in a museum's case of treasure.

For suddenly, as rare things will, they vanished.

## RED PASSING

**T**HE Thlingit were strong people and bent the Athapascan Indians from the East and North, beyond the Coast Range, with whom they came in contact. The Russians came, but even they could not enslave the Thlingit as they had done the gentler Eskimoan Aleuts, nor make them work indentured. Thlingit were themselves accustomed to take and break the people to the more far South, enslave them for their daily service. In war and arts, the Thlingit and the Haida showed a far greater energy, as well as adaptation to environment, than others of this long-drawn North Pacific Coast. The girl Kah-tlyudt was kinswoman to Haida as well as Thlingit, and both are cousin people.

The Russian coming, first of all the whites to Northern Islands, had been with fire and sword. They came as Cæsar's legionaries came first to Britain. Years passed, as years passed too in Britain, and again came certain strangers to the Northern Islands—men bearing in their upraised arms a weapon mightier than edged sword. It was not Cæsar made The Islands Roman, but Augustine who made them Romish.

The painted beaks of Haida craft were curiously like those curved prows of the British Saxons. The shore-cliffs and steep-sided fiords which raider kinsmen of our own blood once knew well, were as the wid-sith way of Thlingit in the northern waters, sea-sailing on the curving swan-road, breasting the

sounding sea over the deep water, with foam-necked bow upon the fauch and fallow flood. Lust of glory lay within those hearts, the joy of shield-play and of sword-game, unafraid. "This was their nobleness from those who went before them, that they so often, in combat against any foeman, should guard their land, their hoard, their home."—Kah-tlyudt had no need to feel shame for Thlingit honor, Thlingit skill; nor need we be unboastful of Anglo-Saxon manhood, Anglo-Saxon sentiment for home and all the dear relationships of home, even though contract law of southern conqueror might not hold fast with either Saxon or with Thlingit, and law of property was still unwritten custom.

Into that Northern Island world of Britain strode Saint Augustine, bearing aloft his symbol of new life—a new and foreign faith to Anglo-Saxon. He came with few companions, it is true; but all the grandeur that yet was and ever had been Rome stood ranked behind him silently implicit there. So Augustine came to those Islanders whom others, though not he, called "damned and hateful heathen."

When Kah-tlyudt was a child of twelve years old, Mrs. A. R. McFarland opened a Christian school for girls in Wrangell but Chief Snook resisted all attempts to bring his daughter under her sphere of influence. These gnarled old chieftains of the North who had kept troth and order for their people for so long, were now confronted by a subtler higher enemy than they had met before, to challenge both their will and interest. The chiefs had their own and well-tested three-fold weapons for use against the grizzly of their northern forests, but knew no certain skill of spear-thrust to prevail against the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Some met the challenge of the Lion

in the Way, as Alfred noblest Saxon of them all once met it, saying: "He seems to me a very foolish man and very wretched, who will not increase his understanding while he is in this world, and ever wish and long to reach that endless life, where all shall be made clear." Others of the older Thlingit generation were never in their lifetime conquered by the Galilean, and Snook was of that number.

Twelve was a marriageable age and it was time that Kah-tlyudt thought of marriage, so the question was considered in the classic Thlingit manner with much discussion in the thane-hall. Answering Snook's far-sent word, a party of Tsimpseans arrived at Wrangell with the others and these proposed a marriage for the high-caste beautiful child-woman. Their red-black boats drawn on the beach were heavy with the gifts they brought, and solemn talk began and long negotiation, in the accustomed manner of the Island People. But Kah-tlyudt proved a difficult young person! Was it the hidden half of Scotch in her, I wonder—stubborn heredity at war with subtle training? The Tsimpsean Chief who brought proposal of immediate marriage was a powerful man, but one of middle age and twenty-seven years her senior. Also he was a Christian, for Father Duncan's early Yorkshire influence still carried on, down in the Tsimpsean country. Through all the long discussion, Snook proved indulgent, kind, inclined in all ways to respect his foster-daughter's wishes. Also, he had in mind a secret thought—alliance with the Head-Chief Shaksh of his own people, whom he considered a more worthy mate for this dear child.

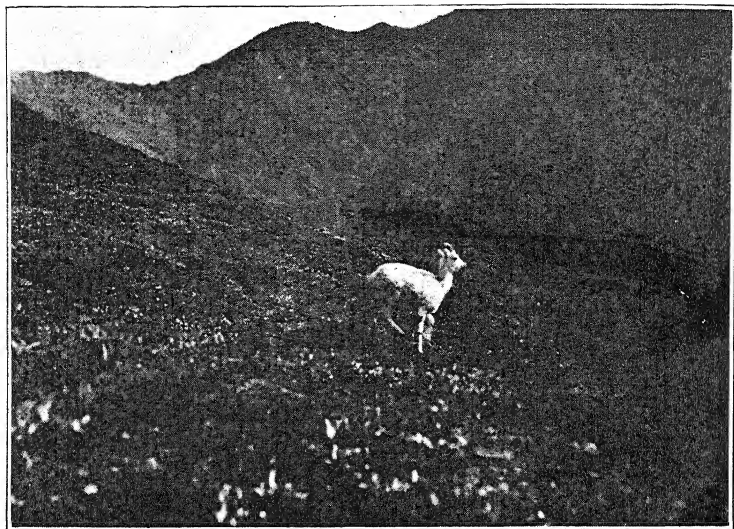
But the Tsimpseans of British Columbia had been in contact with the Whites for longer than the Wrangell folk. Their Chief (who had espoused the name

of Abraham Lincoln with his espousal of Christianity!) persuaded all the Christian men of Wrangell to support his cause; and many of Snook's friends and neighbors believed sincerely that the future held more promise for Kah-tlyudt as wife of some established Christian chief, than if exposed (as they saw that she soon would be) to all the dangers of alliance with one of the, to them, unmoral white men beginning now to flock through Wrangell and up the Stikine into Cassiar for gold. Her beauty meant especial danger, so they saw; and "Abraham Lincoln" seemed a fair and generous man, although he surely was determined to have the girl, even against her will. And a very definite will it was, although she had no wish to grieve her father.

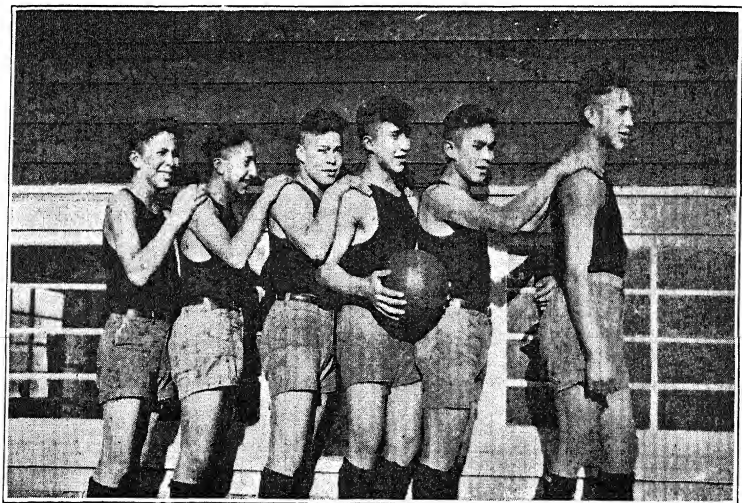
At last, under the pressure of the Tsimpsean's "heavy words," a compromise was reached. Snook consented that his daughter become affianced to the stranger, but it was understood she was not to be hurried into any actual ceremony of marriage against her will. Lincoln on his part made promise that, if she would go with him down to Port Simpson, he would await the time when Kah-tlyudt wished to think of matrimony. So they set out in the canoe for that long journey, Abraham Lincoln with two kinsmen of his own and the young girl companioned by an older woman of her people. It took three weeks to make the trip, a most unusual length of time; but the weather proved most unpropitious, very stormy. And Lincoln's never discontinued wooing seems to have been as leaden-footed and as stormy as the unpropitious passage of the seas; for when at last they neared his tribal home, the man was even further from the girl's won heart than on the day they shoved off from the beach at Wrangell. It was



*Photograph by Albertstone, Sitka, 1893.*  
"SHE LEARNED TO STAND ERECT, WITH HEAD HELD HIGH."



"TO SUCH SHEEP, MAN IS MORTAL ENEMY."



TSIMPSEAN BOYS FROM SCHOOL AT METLAKATLA.



a thoroughly frightened homesick child who finally reached Port Simpson and was given to the care of Tsimpsean women there.

Port Simpson was a British post, an old Hudson Bay station now organized under a strict reign of law, and all the Natives living there were using white-man ways. One of the Tsimpsean women of the village had bitterly resented that any chief of her own people should have felt a need or wish to fare so far afield in search of wife. This woman sought the little strange one out, made friends with her, and soon guessed the girl's own sad unhappiness in her anomalous position.

"You know," she said to Kah-tlyudt, "we all live under white-man law, down here. If you have no desire to marry this chief, no one can force you to it."

The Thlingit answered that she had no slightest wish to marry him, it was the last thing in her heart. Swiftly then the Tsimpsean spread the word of this to all the women. By evening of that self-same day a great pow-wow was called, a council of all people, including even Mr. Crosby, the Methodist missionary there. The little girl was brought before them, questioned, and long interminable speeches dragged on and on into the night—for every man must have his say upon the matter, the democratic and town-meeting custom of The People. At last the stranger was called on to speak and voice her thought.

Against the heavy words of strongly voiced opinion, their weight almost a unanimity against her, the little twelve-year-old made speech before the elders, in council chamber of the alien people.

"I am a stranger, no kin to any here. You are a powerful people, you can do with me as your thought directs. You can kill me, if that is your law.

You ask me for my word, and I will give it. I will not marry this your chief."

Two young Tsimpseans of good family, who had recently been schooled down in Victoria, now came over to her side and said they thought it was a shame to force a marriage on this unprotected homesick child. The talk finally resulted in Mr. Crosby and his wife taking Kah-tlyudt to their own home where, for the first time in her life, she came in contact with the white-man custom and the white-man God. She proved an eager pupil, quick to learn and quick to win the love of both the Crosbys. All children of the school had little duties given them, such as cleaning rooms or washing dishes or some small gardening task. So now this Thlingit of high caste, with helpless hands and feet, who had been waited upon all her life by slaves, learned how to sweep and dust and wash the dishes, to dig in earth, know soil and dirt. She even tried to milk the family cow, as she had seen the Crosbys do—but cow and Crosbys both put a swift end to that! Another time she helped to carry earth in buckets for the flower beds. The Crosbys did not know, of course, she had an English name, Matilda; but since Kah-tlyudt was a hard word and it was customary to give a Christian name, they called her Sarah—because, so I'm inclined to think, of the proposed alliance with another tribal Abraham.

Soon word was carried North to Snook, by ways that Indians know, that his dear daughter was a slave among the Whites, was doing a slave's work! In anger and in great distress of mind, he made the long trip south to bring her home. But Kah-tlyudt's aunts and other kinswomen of Wrangell were anxious, now, that she should have a true white woman's

education, for they had come to see it an advantage through the increasing work of the McFarland School. They went in a body to Mrs. McFarland, begging her please to write a letter to the southern missionaries asking that they keep the child and school her. This she did, so that when Snook arrived at Port Simpson the Crosbys flatly refused to give their little Sarah up to him.

But by whatever name they called her, Kah-tlyudt or Sarah or any other, she was a very homesick youngster—so much that she stole out from the mission one midnight with only two small blankets and a bundle of her clothing, pushed off in a canoe and started paddling North, alone! In the dark night and hurried panic of her flight, she had not noticed the canoe was leaky; but near daybreak she was forced to make a landing on a small nearby island and, exhausted from her night's hard work, wet and bedraggled, as soon as sun came up and warmed her tired small body she curled to sleep behind some rocks—a long sleep, all oblivious of time's passing. But meanwhile, in Port Simpson, many things were happening.

When the girl's absence was discovered, question and query and great talk about it and about began to fly, as talk will in a smallish town. A miner just returned from Cassiar said that he knew the girl, remembered her from Wrangell—because she had an uncle there whom he knew well, a Thlingit by the name of Gush.

“A Thlingit by the name of Gush!” The mention of that single word threw utterly new light on the whole question of Kah-tlyudt's coming, her projected marriage, and now the matter of her flight and probable death. Gush is a very highly honored Tsimp-

sean name, and several generations before this time a woman of this Tsimpsean family had married one of Kah-tlyudt's Thlingit ancestors, taking the name Gush with her to the North and giving it, as was the custom, to a favored nephew. At once, the whole Native village was agog with excitement, for now a large portion of the Port Simpson people realized that they were actually the lost girl's blood brothers and sisters, in the Indian style. The most powerful loyalty which the Northern Islands know, began immediately to work and ferment in her name. Abraham Lincoln and his family now took on the rôle of villains in the piece, were persecutors of this poor little sister of our own, responsible for our sister's death! Indeed, in no time tribal war seemed imminent.

And when at last the child was found and brought back to the town, it was to a real home-coming. The weeping Tsimpseans embraced her, called her "sister." Never again could she be called a stranger here or know herself as friendless, and never again, I think, did she run away from anything! The school work too came better, after this episode. She learned the church hymns, learned to love them—for Thlingit are great rhythm-loving people; and if Abraham had not looked upon this Sarah and found her very fair, perhaps she might have been most happy at Port Simpson. But the Tsimpsean was constantly entreating her and keeping her poor heart in torment, for she could not care for him.

And then at last word came from out the North straight from the lonely heart of that old dear-loved Chief at Wrangell. If the Crosbys would consent to let his daughter come back home, Chief Snook would on his part consent to send her to the Christian

school at Wrangell, if that was her desire. It really was tremendous compromise upon the Thlingit's part, and with the message too came a fat poke of golden nuggets from the uncle in the Cassiar—to pay her passage money North upon the white-man sloop now making regular mail runs in between the Islands. For the first time in her life the now tall nearly full-grown girl adventured in a boat, not a canoe, and for the first time knew the dubious experience of sea-sickness!

Though Snook had given his consent and kept his pagan word well to the letter, his proud heart never could be happy about his daughter's school life. She took her rightful "white" name of Matilda now, for one thing, and soon was Tillie to all who knew her. But that was a slight hurt beside the other, which was that she had manifold duties to perform at school and this was not to Chief Snook's notion of the way a high-caste girl should live. It often seems to me that even the best of our missionaries have not quite realized or given all the credit that they should to the stout-hearted perseverance shown by many a high-caste Thlingit girl, in going through with courses that meant manual labor. The Whites have seldom really sensed just what caste meant to these proud people. One of the student nurses in the Government Hospital at Juneau recently, from a patrician Sitkan family, was often taunted even by the very patients she was tending (who knew her caste traditions) about the menial tasks that she was doing. When you are very young as well as very proud, ridicule and loss of prestige are mighty bitter pills to swallow! But these girls swallowed both, and didn't know the meaning of "a quitter."

What made things worse in Snook's eyes was the

fact that most of the first girls at the McFarland Home were low-caste people of no family—waifs and strays who could be easily picked up by the Mission, to educate and teach. That his dear child should be companion daily to such “trash,” seemed to the old aristocrat the final insult of the alien conqueror against his ancient pride. “Is it for such a life as this I raised you?” he would cry. “Chief Shaksh will marry you. He is a great and good true man, of The People.” But she said “no” with such finality that even Snook gave up his prayer to her, though never wholly reconciled.

The early interpreter for the missionaries at Wrangell was Mrs. George Dickinson, a woman of great personality and devotion who was of mingled Thlingit, Tsimpsian and white blood and married to a white trader. Some of my own people, I have found, hold something of a prejudice against “mixed blood” or Creole (the latter word, used in Alaska, means usually a Russian admixture). Hear then the word of Father Jetté, that wise Jesuit and man of world-acknowledged scholar’s learning, who lived so many years in our Alaska. He said once, as a term of highest praise for one of great good sense and courage: “He is *worthy* to be reckoned as a half-breed.” And another thoughtful student of the problem says, “Absorption into the dominant race is likely to be the fate of the Indian, and *there is no reason to fear* that, when freed from his anomalous environment, the mixed blood will not win an honorable social, industrial and political place in the national life.” We who have recently seen a Coolidge of part Indian blood as President, a Curtis of part Indian blood as Vice-President, are scarcely in a position to disagree! Far from hiding their Indian

heritage, both of these men—as well as many others of notable achievement—are mightily proud of it.

Mrs. Dickinson was leaving Wrangell and the matter of a new interpreter was pressing. Of course, none of the ministers who came knew any Indian tongue and Chinook was a traders' language solely, helpless for interpretation of such concepts and such language problems as arose when, with that Pauline Greek and Latin dogma rolling from their lips, there was a call to render in translation such tough words as evangelist, conversion, temptation, redemption, salvation—or (being Presbyterian, as I am myself!) damnation. While Thlingit, like our own dear homely Saxon, is more concrete and physical a tongue than Latin Fathers made, still it is capable of leaning well toward figurative meaning. The Anglo-Saxon Bible was a work of beauty, as well as sense; and to a mind intelligent and keen, as Tillie's mind was fast becoming, the problems of translation were, while knotty, yet not insuperable. Small wonder then that S. Hall Young began to train this girl for his interpreter—though she was really but a child in years, about the age when you and I were entering High School. For any one with only a few months of contact with us Whites, it surely was a task to thread the maze of all that intellection and language, implicit in the Pauline doctrine!

Matilda, who had learned by now to curb her natively so liberal hand, to be subservient proudly, went every Saturday to Hall Young's study where he would read to her the next day's Bible lesson, explaining carefully so she could later turn it into Thlingit with a full understanding of the English meaning. You may catch a notion of all the latent lurking difficulty, when you recall how very many

choicest sections of our Scripture deal with the symbolism of the Shepherd, the lore and feeling of a long-time pastoral people, and of men as sheep that wander from the fold—sheep that are timid, frightened, lost. But Thlingit word for sheep refers to mountainy wild creatures that never have been pent in fold, have never known a gentle shepherd's care; and to such sheep, a man is mortal enemy. Thlingit know sheep only as hardy animals, perfectly at home on bare and rocky hills and mountain fastness, preferring the most desolate remoteness and skilful in defence with their sharp horns and hoofs against even the most powerful prey-beasts. All the rich color and the connotation of Bible story are quite lost, if this word sheep should be translated literally. Yet Scriptures Old and Scriptures New alike are threaded with analogy of sheep. You and I both know how Presbyterian clergy (and my own father 'mongst them!) delight in the expounding of Pauline epistles. But with a realization of how hard it is for even deepest thinkers to follow that close-knotted Paulinism of "the first Christian theologian," you will guess the struggles this young girl must make, using an art so alien to her nature, to turn such themes into intelligible Thlingit.

"Tell them about the fishes and the Fisherman, Mr. Young," you can hear Tillie plead. "My people know the way of fish, and how to net and draw them in the stream and sea. Tell them about Him as a Fisherman of men. That is a true good story."

Hall Young and Tillie worked away together at this hard problem of translation for many a year, and gradually the girl acquired an excellent knowledge of both English and the Bible, learning to



read with ease and freedom. Small wonder that, not long before his recent death and thinking back upon those hard past years of intellectual partnership, Dr. Young said of her: "Tillie Paul Tamaree remains the most influential Native woman in Alaska, the spiritual mother of her people, the example bright and shining of what Christianity can accomplish in a most difficult mission field."

I myself knew Dr. Young from my own childhood days, and as an old man he would often tell a story which he claimed was actual experience though Tillie says that she does not remember it. Hall Young had chosen the story of the flood for Bible lesson on a certain Sunday, and Tillie stood there at his side before the people to be his "interrupter," as the mission workers called it, feelingly! When he came to the passage reading that it rained forty days and forty nights and the waters covered the earth, Tillie did not translate it. He repeated, thinking she had not caught the words, but still the Thlingit girl said nothing. He turned to her and said, "Tillie, what's the matter? Don't you understand it? Why don't you translate what I read?"

"Mr. Young, I cannot. What you read is foolish, and if I say it, my people will not believe you. Don't you know that it has rained here often, for more than forty days and nights, but the water never yet has covered the earth?"

Really to appreciate this story you should have spent a rainy season upon the Islands of the North, when fogs and rains are almost constant, the drip of water never from your ear. Then you would know that Tillie was quite right in thinking forty days and nights of rain nothing at all unusual! The woven imagery of desert reared and sun scorched dry-land

people, which paints the tan, red, blazing back-drop of the Scripture scene and pageant, is something northern missionaries have found most difficult to bring within the range of dripping-green-surrounded Islanders, whose daily travel is a seaway between the snow-crowned mountains.

The summer Tillie turned sixteen, Mrs. Dickinson came back to Wrangell and with her was a youthful kinsman from the Tongass who had been mining up in Cassiar, but stopped to visit with her a few days on his way home. The Mission owned a large canoe which they used mainly for pleasure purposes, so a picnic was planned and the handsome curly-headed young stranger went along to help paddle the heavy boat. Little Kah-tlyudt was now grown to be a tall and lovely girl, with large expressive eyes, clear white skin touched with red, and wealth of heavy raven-tinted hair. It was not good form in Thlingit for a man to speak to a young woman by her name, but the Tongass visitor was on the watch for any indirect approach. The girl was quite acutely conscious of all this by-play, but so bashful that she dared not let him catch her open look and kept her lovely face averted. In final desperation, the young half-French-Canadian finally spoke, though only just the simple words, "Please, will you give me a cup of water?" Yet Tillie was too agitated even to answer that request, but only blushed the deeper!

The young man did not hurry home to Tongass, as he had planned. He stayed on and on at Wrangell. His name was Louis Francis Paul—French kingly given names from his white father's people, as Margaret and Matilda were Scottish queenly names from hers. Not many months, and Louis Paul

joined with that Wrangell church of which the girl already was a charter member. Then they were married by the simple Christian ceremony.

But old Chief Snook was crushed. No marriage talk of parents had been carried on in Thlingit style. No presents were exchanged, no great feast made, and no respect at all was shown for any of his own "old custom" and still strongly held beliefs. By rare good fortune, though, one rigid Thlingit law had not been broken: Tillie was of the Raven and Louis of the Eagle phratry. Had they both been of the same clan and then had dared to think of marriage, it is impossible to know what action Snook would have taken. He was a fierce man and in his young days he had himself killed his own niece for violation of the ancient Thlingit hard-fast law against alliance with a "brother." The only law of man or God against whose breakage you and I have any similar feeling—of rooted horror and the sense that the transgressor puts himself utterly beyond the social pale—is incest. But to the Thlingit, marriage between two people of a phratry *is* incest, for they are actually a brother and a sister.

"But that is foolish notion," you may say. "There is no other way of looking at relationship of brother-sister, but that of actual blood-bond. If that blood-bond does not exist in fact, no one can claim or should claim any other."

No one? And have you never, then, dipped into Canon Law of Incest, promulgated by the Council of Trent and binding still on all believers of the Roman faith? There, those associated in the bonds of *name* are explicitly forbidden marriage and "spiritual incest" is made quite as real as blood-tie, if between "the baptizer and baptized, the baptizer

and the parents of the baptized, the baptizer and the godfather and godmother, the godparents and the baptized and *its* parents." So Snook's tribal custom and a body of our own most ancient canon law run side by side, upon the matter of "mere name" being an insuperable impediment to marriage.

No one? Say that, as I once did, to a good Thlingit and maybe he will shame you out of your own sacred Book, as he did me! He said, "When you get home and have a Bible handy, I ask you please to turn to Matthew the twelfth chapter and the last five verses. Then glance at Matthew 23:8, and run your eye through to 25:40, as well as a dozen other passages that I could name for you, in other books of your own Book. Please read these carefully, my friend, before you speak again to any Thlingit about the ethic and religion of true brotherhood!"

—The young Pauls went upon a truly Pauline journey now, sent by the Presbyterian Board of Missions to be the first apostles to the Chilkat people. The trip was made in a canoe and it took many days, for the Chilkats were the tribe farthest removed from any influence of Whites along the coast and, being a very wealthy and a very powerful people, they were the fiercest and by far the most untamed. Here a belief in witchcraft flourished all unchecked and their strange customs and old superstitions about both death and sickness were fiercely primitive. The young couple were received by old Chief Shotridge very kindly, though—in part through native character and in part because the Chilkats were wide traders, intermediaries between the Coast folk and the Athapascans of the Interior, so that they valued highly the good offices and will of other Thlingit

tribes, in contacts further south. How much the Mission heads knew this and acted on it, how much it was by chance they picked on two chiefs' children—to use those very clan ties and the caste prestige which Mission claimed to so ignore—I frankly do not know. But I do know, because I know Alaska, that these were powerful motives back of Chilkat hospitality to these newcomers. They came as princely hostages from distant, but an allied, people. Ground was given them for both a school and living-cabin, and before winter came a good two-story log house had been built and a school established.

The primitive belief of the Chilkat in regard to any sickness was that a witch had caused it. The family of the sick one would consult the medicine man or shaman (a word the Russians brought) who then dressed himself in ceremonial costume, put on his necklace of bones and quills and other paraphernalia of his position, fasted, drank salt water only, and finally sank into a trance during which he would consult his "Yake" or familiar spirit. This Yake would tell the shaman what "witch" had been the cause of all the trouble, and that unfortunate's own relatives must thereupon seize the accused (be it man, woman or child), draw back the head into a torturing posture and fasten it back so by the long hair that everybody wore—for short hair was a sign of mourning only. They tied the head back fast to the victim's arms, which were also tightly bound behind the back. Then the poor "witch" was thrown into a hole under the community house, to starve to death. Every one in the village would be in a high pitch of nerves during this ordeal and it was quite as much as one's life was worth to interfere with what was being done.

The Chilkats tried to keep the witchcraft business secret from the Pauls, but they could not help guessing when something of this kind was going on, for the whole village would be in stew of ferment. Once they were able to rescue a poor witch, twice they proved too late. Only the fact that all the Chilkats knew that injury or insult to the Pauls would offend both the powerful Wrangell and the Tongass tribes, brought them safely through these crises.—As her own people say of Tillie Paul, "She has the heart of a man, and no man can lie down or be a coward in her presence."

It was on their return to Wrangell for a short time, that their first child was born. They named him Samuel Kendall, for Dr. S. Hall Young and for that Dr. Henry Kendall who was long the honored secretary of the Mission Board. And now at last the young people went to visit the husband's family. When they drew up their boat upon the beach at Tongass old Yash-noosh, Louis' grandfather, tottered down to welcome them; and there, like to another very aged broken man, this leader of his people took the young child in his arms and blessed the infant Samuel, after the ancient Thlingit fashion—then gave him back again to his young mother. Yash-noosh had been a very rich man in his day but riches among men of his race and position were acquired only to be given freely, thus adding honor to one's name. Twelve feasts of giving he had made, with guests from over all Southeast Alaska and from the Haidas and the Tsimpseans, too, from neighbor British territory. Four of these feasts had been in honor of this loved favorite grandson, who had a pierced hole in the ear for each feast given in his name—the Native custom.

The young man's tribesmen clung to him in loving honor and would not have him leave them. So a school was made here and much good work done, his influence being weighty. In May of 1885 Louis Paul took his wife over to Port Simpson, the place that little "Sarah" had once run away from! Here William Paul, her second son, was born. On Tillie Paul's first trip back home to Wrangell after they had come to live in Tongass, old Yash-noosh called his grandson to him and presented a large specially built canoe made by skilled Haidas, for him to take as gift to Matilda's foster-father. This was indeed a marriage present fitting both of their life stations, and when Chief Snook received the gift his heart warmed in him and he was reconciled at last to his ward's unconventional "new way" marriage. All of these years it had been shame to him, but now the stigma of that graceless Christian marriage was in part removed. Back at Tongass once again, six months of every year were given to their teaching; then in the spring and summer, while the Tongass people were away and busy at their hunting and their fish-camps, six other months could be well spent in pleasant visit with the Wrangell friends or employed in their private business. For Louis Paul was both a skilful guide and an experienced fur buyer; so that, with their small half-year mission salary in addition, the young couple were very comfortable financially—and joyously too happy.

Now the Red Gods were jealous.

## BRONZE INTO SILVER

**O**N a certain clear, calm morning of early December, Louis Paul and Samuel Saxman the government schoolmaster set out on a short canoe trip to choose some nearby site for a new Christian village. When these two said good-bye to Louis Paul's children and wife upon the Tongass beach that day, it was the last ever seen of them.

The weather continued perfect, but ten days went by with no word from the travellers. Then The People began to talk. Search parties were sent out and finally all the Natives of Southeastern Alaska were united in scouring the beach-line, on every island in the vicinity. On the tenth of January a broken piece of canoe, a fragment of pack, a gun tangled in a piece of rope, were brought as final evidence that the two men were indeed lost. As her third child, named for his lost father, came into the world that night, the keening of the Indian women of the village broke out upon the winter air; and all night long the wail continued in the community house of Yash-noosh, according to "old custom." As Tillie Paul lay on her sick-bed in the little two-room cabin next door, which villagers of Tongass had built because they loved her husband, she was utterly unable to realize her loss—the only thought which crossed her tortured mind being a deep regret, that people whom her husband had so earnestly and carefully taught should revert now so quickly to their pagan custom.



There was, and there still is, a grave suspicion of foul play about the mystery of Louis Paul's death. He had been working under contract in the fur trade with a certain white man and his father, owners of a sloop. The father especially posed as a very religious man, always having his Bible in plain sight and winning the full confidence of missionaries. But Louis Paul discovered, soon after he became associated with these traders, that they had stolen a large cache of Native goods—over a thousand Hudson Bay blankets as well as other property of great value—which some chief had been saving for a potlatch. Since no Thlingit ever stole from Thlingit and the Law of the Cache was inviolate, it was the custom of The People in the good old days to keep the bulk of all their treasure cached out in the woods for safety, rather than trust them to the village houses where there was constant risk of fire.

When Louis Paul had urged the traders to return the stolen goods immediately, they had flat-footedly refused. Then he had broken with them openly and had reported their admitted theft to Customs Officers at Wrangell, later appearing as a prosecuting witness when the case came up for trial at Juneau. The younger trader was convicted and received jail sentence, although the elder was set free. Shortly after the death of Louis Paul, however, and some time before it was generally admitted that he was indeed irreparably lost, this trader appeared again upon the scene—cheerful and seemingly with no ill will, yet very positive and certain about his quasi-partner's death. The woman had not thought this strange then, but in the later years she found her mind reverting to the circumstance with shadow of dread speculation. What's more, for some time previous to

her husband's going, this white man had annoyed her very greatly with his attempts at a too friendly interest—so very much so that she ordered him explicitly never to cross her door-step, and once she had been forced to slap him stingingly upon the face. He was a person she truly feared.

No Native of that district but knew of Louis Paul's superior skill as boatman, none better in that Island land of seamen. They knew he was a very cautious man, and they knew too that he had every reason in the world to take good care both of himself and his companion. He was an expert swimmer, the weather had been calm for a long period.—To this day, "Year-that-Louis-Paul-was-drowned" is date from which the Tongass people reckon time.

Tillie Paul had learned well the white-man religion, but she knew nothing of his law. Now the young widow found herself involved in very complicated matters and totally untrained in business. Louis Paul had been the masterful and dominant person, capable and efficient, able and aggressively doing, so that there had been no occasion for his wife to take any but a passing interest in business affairs. The women of her people and her period did not. While Paul's white one-time "partner" offered now to buy out his large stock of trade-goods—and took them—he never paid her one red copper cent. A bill for these upon a Portland firm, amounting to \$800, she spent the next years paying off in little painfully saved instalments—until, when the (to her) vast sum was yet but half defrayed, Wadhams & Company sent her a "receipt in full." That generous act is still a vivid thing in her remembering heart! A large shipment of valuable furs which Louis Paul had recently sent south, disappeared

mysteriously and completely. Because of the agreement which Louis Paul had entered into with those white men, the notion hovered dimly in her mind that she could not be legally compelled, perhaps, to pay *all* the unpaid accounts. But the white trader's presence was so exceedingly distasteful to her, she wished to clear up all joint matters without delay or argument. Her sole thought then and for the next years following, was just to keep her husband's name and memory clean and free, and raise her sons to be completely worthy of him.

For days she did not know which way to turn. There was no way into the future, all the past ways were closed. Snook now was dead, none of the other Wrangell relatives was very close. Then Sheldon Jackson, Commissioner of Education for the Federal Government and the strong man who later came to be a second father to her, sent Tillie Paul to Sitka to become one of the workers in the Sitka Training School. To any one not well acquainted with Thlingit history, this might seem the ideal solution for her future, a safe quiet harbor for the grieving mother and her babies. But no other human heart will ever know in full the inward trepidation with which Tillie Paul set out upon that Sitka journey.

The people of Sitka and the people of Wrangell were the bitterest of hereditary enemies. The last overt act between these two tribes had been the massacre of a large party of Wrangell people, both men and women, who had gone to Sitka for a "peace dance"! At that time and during the hostilities which followed, many of Tillie Paul's close relatives had been killed. During all her most impressionable childhood days in Snook's household, the memory of this unavenged insult to the honor of the Wrangell

people, especially to her own Kiks-uddy family, was very bitter and vivid. All the small boys of her own age, with whom she played her childhood games, were being trained deliberately to hardness in both spirit and body, for the sole and avowed purpose of avenging that murder when they should grow to manhood. If you remember, too, that stirring family pride which was her heritage and all the thorough schooling in the Thlingit code of honor she had known—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, “an eye of the same color and a tooth of the same size”—then you can guess some fragment of the spiritual warfare in her soul as Tillie Paul travelled up to Sitka, to carry the heart-breaking, heart-reshaping Christlike ideals of peace and of forgiveness.

In all the years that followed she never once drew back from that hard path, though they were years of desperately hard physical exertion. The Sitka Training School of that time was a pioneer institution, poorly built and poorly equipped and sadly lacking in any adequate funds. Its pupils came from all Southeast Alaska, from every tribe and people; but in addition to her work at school she travelled down into the Indian Village daily over a lonely and unlighted road, in rain or snow, to teach the revolutionary doctrines of a White Christ to her own bitterest hereditary enemies. In those days the old clan feeling still ran high, and there was more than one occasion when her life was truly in grave danger—occasions which she will not speak about, to-day. These very people have become her nearest and her dearest friends, and all the inner story of those early days will never come to light through her. Enough to say, as all Alaska knows, the history of Tillie Paul

is the history of the Sitka Training School; and all over southeastern Alaska, leaders among Native people of all tribes to-day were once *her* boys and girls at Sitka. By one of those strange paradoxes which rule the human soul, out of this woman's darkest turmoil came the deepest and the most far-reaching peace.

Her strength of body was not equal to her strength of spirit, though. After a full day spent at school she must return at night to her small cottage, to clean and sew for her own family of three boys. The boiler in the school laundry failed to work, one winter, and she herself did washing for that host of children, and by hand! This type of labor left its permanent mark upon her. At work with William Kelly the school superintendent and her cousin Fannie Willard, she reduced the Thlingit language to a written form. This was very hard to do, as Thlingit contains many a sound for which there is no English transliteration. Thlingit has also a much more elaborate grammatical construction than has English. This woman, body tired, spent hours and days and months at work with scientists, ethnologists, and archeologists, who came to study here the history of Alaska's Native people—time given without thought of payment, and too often with but meagre thanks.

She learned her English from educated and cultured people: first the Crosbys, then Mrs. McFarland, and later from Dr. and Mrs. S. Hall Young. For this reason she has always used correct fine English speech, although with a suggestion merely of quaint accent due to the natural tendency of Thlingit to elide the letter R. She had been trained, as others of her caste were trained, that high-born maidens

should be seen not heard, and that it was good form for women to keep their heads lowered and to speak with soft and gentle voice—the very grace our Shakespeare called an excellent thing in woman! During her years at the McFarland Home she had to learn to stand erect, there at side of Dr. Young all during the church service, with head held high, and throwing out her voice so that it could be clearly heard by all the people. This did severest violence to every girlish instinct and long training. Then in the years that followed she made several trips to Eastern States, in fact all through The States. Here she was guest in homes of women high within the circles of the church, and here her charm of manner made her greatly in demand as public speaker. Though she made many hard-fast and dear personal friends among these women in The States, yet to get up in a wide public place and speak to strangers there has never ceased to be a trial to her. Only the very stiffest discipline of self and sense of personal duty, forced her to do what loyalty to the “new way” demanded of her.

After serving in the school as seamstress, nurse, laundry matron, village worker, and general liaison officer between the school and people, she had been advanced to Girls' Matron at the munificent salary of \$250 yearly, a position which paid \$500 when held by a white woman.—That's how, my friends and kinsmen, we who are “white” teach elemental justice to our red brothers!—This was a rather choice position and one coveted by several other workers, to such degree that Christian spirit went completely in eclipse and they began to make things difficult for Tillie Paul. This open jealousy, coupled with a quite natural resentment at the gross salary discrim-

ination, made her decide to go to Juneau where she knew that she could easily support herself and children by her sewing, with far less hard physical effort and with fewer spiritual trials. After the years she had so given to the School, she could not bear to see herself become a focus of contention, now. She said no word and that was characteristic of her, for she wished no comment and no argument. She simply packed to go.

A fellow worker happened to discover the packed trunk, however, and went in great alarm to Sheldon Jackson, then in charge. He sought out Tillie Paul immediately, learned quite enough to sense the situation, talked with her in his friendly father fashion, begged her to stay, spoke feelingly of all the ties and loyal bonds between them, gave the much-needed suitable reproof to shame the jealous ones, and on his own responsibility boosted her salary at once to four hundred dollars. Sheldon Jackson was another of those Alaska workers whom I have known since my own childhood, and I have seen him as a man of quick thought and of direct act, hitting nouns squarely in objective case, his verbs all flying forward in the active mood—a great leader and a genuine moderator of my father's church, a creator and a trail-blazer. Illuminated letters write his name in capitals upon the pages of Alaska story: from reindeer-bringing to the starving Eskimos up in our Farthest North, all down the lengthy and additional sum of good deeds done for many and in many ways, here in-amongst the Islands.

One great mistake—or so it seems to me—that quite a few earliest missionaries made in our Alaska, was to declare that *all* the Native ways were wrong. Father Duncan made mistakes at Metlakatla, but he

did not make this mistake. Indeed he strongly encouraged the British Tsimpseans to keep many of their old customs, and perhaps this was one secret of his signal success. But many others never tried at all to understand the Native institutions, to get at any why-ness of them or their rooted reason, but simply called all ordinary practice bad and started out to make it over from the ground floor up! They came here to a people settled in a way of living native to the Islands and, in order to win over these same people to the white-man way of living or in order to make Christians of them just as soon as possible, this type of missionary sought to bring about a complete and an immediate severance with all the past, all the "old customs." Anything in Thlingit natural way of living which differed from the white-man way, was looked upon as "sin" and frowned on by the church—without discrimination as to whether it was inherently bad, or merely different.

Matilda had been taught at the McFarland Home that it was wrong to chew gum: Not that to do so was "bad form" or not in best of taste, but that it was an actual "sin." The Thlingit were immensely fond of natural spruce gum and considered it the choicest delicacy, suitable for gift when wishing to accord especial honor. True to her new training, though, the girl had carefully refrained from gum-chewing ever after, although it was the greatest and a constant temptation. On one occasion, she and her husband had received a gift of a whole sack of spruce gum; but rather than fall into "sin," they righteously had *burned* the whole precious present although (as she will tell you) her mouth watered as each piece was put into the fire!

After Tillie Paul had come to Sitka, Mrs. Haines



(who was for years the president of the Woman's Board of Home Missions) paid a visit to the Sheldon Jackson School, and Tillie Paul with other workers there accorded her the love and honor which she inspired in all who knew her. One evening Tillie came into the living-room, where all the other mission workers were chummily gathered after supper, to visit there with Mrs. Haines. What was her horror and her shock to see the whole room-full of Christian missionaries industriously chewing gum, brought and presented to them by Mrs. Haines herself! They laugh yet over the horror-struck expression on Tillie's face, as she stood in that doorway and the truth dawned on her. She says she still regrets the sack of spruce gum she burned up! But this seeming little incident has lain within her mind for years, a seed of tolerance producing a different and a wider outlook than some other workers knew.

As the years grew and with them her experience under the white man's code, this woman came to a mature philosophy about her own people and much of the "old custom," which often placed her in direct opposition to some of her best-loved and best-respected teachers—even her old friend and early preceptor Dr. S. Hall Young, whom our own "W. F." once called "The Presbyterian Pope"! The Thlingit is by nature friendly and non-combative, in his relationships with others of his own group, and has an inbred instinct for courtesy which keeps him often silent when he is actually in strong disagreement. To his friend, or in the house of his friend, he prefers to keep silent rather than to risk what seems to him the real sin of discourtesy. The white man often does not understand all this real self-repression and stiff social discipline of the "old

custom," and thinks the Thlingit is agreeing with him wholly when he is merely being courteous. I have myself experienced the self-same difficulty, with intimate Japanese friends. It has exhausted all my tact to get them truly to express a radical disagreement with my own opinion. When Tillie Paul the Thlingit woman came into open argument with Dr. Young, as sometimes happened, only her new-found, real and genuinely protestant conviction that keeping silent was real sin, drove her to such action—against her innermost and deep-down trained tradition of silence. With her, to speak out at all meant that she had made a real self-conquest, over the "old man" of Pauline dogma.

It is inevitable perhaps (though it is tragic, too) that any missionary of our faith, in order to set forth the great advantages which Christianity has to offer to the "pagan," should dwell upon the dark side only of the pagan life: that he should call everything which he finds old and rooted there, black and immoral—not simply unmoral, as in truth it often was. Some either did not take the necessary pains to learn that the Thlingit already had his own rigid moral code, or they considered it so different from the Christian code that it must necessarily be "wicked." They forgot the possibility that, in its time and place, it was a good and all-sufficient moral law, producing self-respecting and a comfortably living people. Aside from the two practices of slavery and witchcraft (neither of them unknown in the very midst of our own "white" civilization, in times not too far past for memory) the Thlingit culture was complete and good. Different times produce their different laws, of course, and what was adequate for people long in isolation, ceased to be of equal good or work-

able under the pressure of sharp contact with the white man. The older Thlingit, though, who can remember the conditions before the advent of the Whites, realize now that there was very much of good in the old system which should not have been swept away so ruthlessly, as trash into a dust-bin. Much that was so swept off was really valuable tradition, heirlooms of a precious past—as many an attic discard of our own to-day proves the invaluable heirloom of to-morrow. Tillie Paul had many a hot argument with her white friends upon this subject, and has herself consistently refused to teach her people to look down on their own past. This has been one of her best gifts to them.

I realize that it is very hard for any person, knowing only one set of laws or manners or traditions, to appreciate the customs of another race, brought up through centuries of isolation in quite another but quite well-developed code. And so the early missionaries usually assumed (It was much easier to so assume, rather than try to understand) that Thlingit people had no manners, had no morals. To his own dying day Hall Young could still speak of his coming to the Thlingit as "The tremendous task of changing these ignorant, strange and very naughty children of the forest and the sea, from filthy savages!" This too one-sided and unjust opinion caused ceaseless bitterness, delay and trouble, which just a little grain of patience and some knowledge of the actual conditions could easily have avoided. It is an older way of missionary thought that happily is passing, or is past. To-day, the brainiest men in mission work, its forward leaders, agree thoroughly with Tillie Paul's contentions, held stubbornly and proudly and almost alone, nearly a half century ago.

In her own self she has proved true apostle, of both the old and new.

In truth, there was so very much in common between the old and new, if people just could meet on basis of equality and understanding. There was so much firm rock in that old "pagan" substratum, to make a firm foundation of new building. Why not use it? Why blast it all away? No scholar minimizes all that we ourselves once drew from Pagan thought, in building our own superstructure of a Christian Church, a Christian Civilization. We can't afford to underestimate all that we owe to Rome and Athens, to Alexandria and older lore of those rich African and Asian valleys, running back into the farways of man's thought. Our best pedagogues all say that teaching from what's known to what is unknown forms the surest science and the most unshaken learning. We know this to be true, whether we deal with scientific myth created yesterday by metaphysical physicists (If God be pure X, then is Satan equally pure Y?) or with the holy mysteries of Christian dogma. Out of Pagan "darkness," on earthy base of Pagan truth, one may climb to see the very God, the Highest, like to the bodied heaven in His clearness. Our own civilization is rooted so—then why deny it to another?

And do you ask, "What basis was there, in that life, from which to build a Christian ethic?" Tillie Paul would tell you: "Much! The Thlingit never stole from one another and there was no unchastity, no promiscuity. There is no word in Thlingit tongue for so-called social diseases. There was no disrespect for elders, in the 'old custom.' If you teach us to ridicule and to look down on all that our fathers revered, then you teach us to show dis-

reverence to our fathers. How can I teach the loving fatherhood of God, the blessed sonship of Man, and with the same word preach a disrespect for all our human fathers mean to us?—There was no poverty in the old day, and there was no neglect of orphans or old people. Our compact and perfected social code attended to all that—problems which the Whites find vastly difficult to handle. Even the curious-to-the-white-man custom, of marriage between a widow and the young man next-of-kin to her dead husband, is not a thing unknown in your own sacred Scriptures; nor was this done with us for procreation, but to provide a good home for the woman and her family. It served a social not a personal end just as 'the law that Moses wrote' served to keep *his* tribe intact and well provided.

"A leader of the Thlingit must be born high-caste, but to become a Chief he must achieve the place by merit of high order. What's that belief and practice but good Presbyterian foreordination, joined with the equally good Calvinistic doctrine of making one's 'calling and election sure'? Even the Christ's own threaded-through-all-Gospel constant parable, about those bonds of truer brotherhood than that of mere blood brother, seems but another phrasing and by divine Instructor of our truly ancient Thlingit code of broader loyalties. No Thlingit would be tempted to give a narrow answer to the query, 'Who is my brother?' He knows already the broader meaning, 'for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.'

"On such deep-rooted bases of likeness in essential thought, rather than on false groundwork of all-wrongness, a truly Christ-like Thlingit Christianity could be reared—not with the old forgotten,

scorned or broken, but glorified into a broader meaning. Saint Paul once stood in a strange city, in the midst of Mars' Hill there. *After beholding the devotions of Athenians*, he began his discourse (as the most tactful missionaries always do) with just a word of appreciation for something that certain also of their own poets had said! You will remember that, in effect, his theme for that great missionary discourse was: 'What you already have is very beautiful. Yet after walking through your city and observing well all your activities, I can see that even ye men of Athens, great as is your culture, realize that there may be a Something unknown and beyond, yet very near to each of us. It's of that Something, which I myself have found so very real, I have come here to tell you. I'd like to make it very real to you.'—If lesser men than that great Pioneer had built as Paul did, from the known to the Unknown, linking our best past and our best 'devotions' to the new-found glory of the Christian cause, then in the Northern Islands we might have realized a much more genuine blood-brotherhood between the ancient and poetic wisdom of the Red and all the century-long acquirement of the White.—I do not think this is a dream, but practicality."

Belief in witchcraft? Yes—but Saul of the Old Testament (as Tillie Paul will be quick to remind you) and Saul of the New Testament both honestly believed in the reality of witchcraft and magicians, though The Great Missionary had through dear-bought vision learned a subtler richer magic of divine change: how brute can become man, a man put on the garments of immortal. He too, great missionary to far-lying peoples of the Islands, once blew loud note on Roman bronze; but later learned,

through inner fire-scorch and the mark upon his very body, to breathe through heaven-wrought silver.

—I, who know so well the quick hot way of little Dr. Young in argument, love to think of this fine Thlingit woman—cool in her pride of race, clean in her honesty of true conviction and conversion, daring to face him with her self-forged tools of logic, meeting this master-theologian masterly! Once their minds clashed upon the subject of the “immorality” of the traditional sweat-baths, a common Indian practice and known to Tinneh and to Eskimo as well as Thlingit. She said to him: “You think we were immoral under the ‘old custom’ and you prove it by saying that, when you first came to Wrangell, you saw young men run out from the steam-bath-house and plunge stark naked in the icy water, before the eyes of everybody. You say it made for ‘wicked thought.’ Mr. Young, do *you* think wicked thoughts when you see horses, with only their own beautiful clean hides for covering?—No more did we, about uncovered human bodies, until you came and told us it was wicked.”

One Thlingit, who had helped the early missionaries in countless ways, tore up and burned a book that they had written about the Thlingit people! Why? “It is full of lies,” he said. The writer had told only what he honestly believed was true—but it was only half truth, and gave an absolutely false impression. On all fours with this, there was another statement which early lecturers about the early days amongst the Thlingit used frequently to make, and which filled all the Tillie Pauls of our Alaska with righteous wrath! More than once she has been forced to sit and listen to the assertion that pagan Thlingit did not know what happiness meant, and

that "the sound of laughter was never heard in any Indian village." This she knew to be an utter falsehood, and any one who could say and believe it must be both deaf and blind.

The Thlingit were a very happy people, exceedingly fun-loving. They even had professional storytellers, town jesters, with wide reputations that extended far beyond the confines of their own villages. It was the sole business of such men to provide amusement for their village festivals; and so easily did good laughter come, that gatherings of folk began to laugh almost before a word was uttered. Just the mere calling of his name to speak would provoke peals of laughter. These jesting village philosophers did for their Indian home villages what our own part-Indian Will Rogers broadcasts for forty millions of America to-day!—And not even the long contact now with us more sober-sided Whites, has taken from the Thlingit his good gift of humor. Tillie Paul herself, as well as the good mission cause she worked for all her mature life, owe double debt to Thlingit saving grace of humor.

Much of her magic gift for seeing double values equally is due to this firm poise of mind, and it has made her masterly in matters of most difficult adjustment. In 1903 a situation rose in Wrangell, the oldest Presbyterian Church in Alaska, which resulted in a number of the Native Presbyterians leaving. The Home Board urged that Tillie Paul be sent to heal the breach—the only person in Alaska who possibly could do so. Much against her will she went to Wrangell as a worker there again, interpreter for ministers who later came. She loved Sitka now and was beloved there, and felt unequal to the Wrangell wrangle! However, she acceded to the



Board's desire, and found another happiness in this return to her own village people.

In 1905 she married William Tamaree, of Thlingit and French ancestry; and though for several years after this time she was not on the pay-roll of the church, she still continued doing much of the same work—most of the interpreting, conducting Sunday School and Prayer Meeting, acting as nurse and social worker for the Native population. A good singer, with fine Thlingit sense of rhythm, she had for years been self-taught organist at various missions and had translated many Christian hymns into the Thlingit tongue and taught them to her people. She is the mother of six children and the three sons of her first marriage are all graduates of old Carlisle, where they learned the printing trade. While it is characteristic of the Thlingit that they hate to part with their children even for schooling, she has always been so firm in faith to rear her sons to grow up as good men and not disgrace their father's name, that she not only preached the doctrine of education but herself practiced it with a strong heart. She has proved a Spartan mother in some ways, and never spared the rod. But how her sons adore her! The eldest is law graduate from George Washington University, was for a time the secretary of Congressman Martin Littleton, and is now in business in New York City. The second son, William, is a graduate of business college, with A.B. from Whitworth, one year of theological training, law degree from LaSalle, several years of banking experience, and now practices law in Ketchikan, his great-grandfather's ancient Tongass. The third son graduated from Salem High School, took a business course, and is now editor of an Alaskan weekly

newspaper at Petersburg. The three children of her second marriage were all girls: two of these died, but the eldest is a graduate nurse from the Elizabeth, N. J., General Hospital and is now taking a further course to qualify her for a New York license.

In 1912 the Natives of Alaska organized for mutual development and self-expression into the Alaska Native Brotherhood. This association spread like wild-fire through all the towns of Southeast Alaska, due in great measure to the organizing genius of William and Louis Paul, who on their return to Alaska from Outside colleges, joined whole-heartedly with the new movement. Their mother helped to form the Alaska Native Sisterhood. The Natives of Alaska were by now demanding their right to vote, and each year more and more of them went to the polls and (in spite of the ungentle intimidation and active ill-will of certain Whites) were voting in ever greater numbers. The question became actively acute, a major political problem in the new Territory. Were the Natives of Alaska, Alaska's citizens? Or had the "new way" actually made the Natives of Alaska trespassers upon their native Alaskan soil?

Tillie Paul Tamaree and Charles Jones of Wrangell (a full-blooded Thlingit and the probable successor of that old Chief Shaksh whom Mrs. Dickinson once called "The headest chief of all the Stikines") were in 1923 indicted by the Grand Jury—he for voting illegally and she for aiding and abetting illegal voting. If the enemies of the Native Brotherhood, alarmed by the growing political power and interest of the Alaskan Natives, had lain awake whole nights to do so, they could not have devised a surer method to make trouble for them-

selves. They sought to intimidate the Natives by this legal action, but they had chosen for the object of their attack a woman known all over the "Panhandle," related to practically every tribe of Southeast Alaska and one who had taught boys and girls of every town and people, nursing them as well through the inevitable mumps and measles of school days. As often happens, political cleverness defeated its own end.

The case was tried in Ketchikan and Charles Jones was defended by William Paul, Tillie Paul's second son. Jones was acquitted, and the District Attorney dropped the case against Tillie Paul Tamaree. The politicians now turned their attention to the legislature, attempting to pass a law imposing a strict literacy test. While they were partially successful, Alaska's Delegate in Congress was able to secure a saving clause in the Act (all acts of Territorial legislation being subject to revision and review by Congress) providing that *any one who had previously voted* was exempt from this test.

In the fall of that same year, Mrs. Tamaree went back to her official church work and was assigned to the Native village of Kake and later to Petersburg. She is officially called a lay worker, but she carries on to-day the whole routine of an ordained minister. For years it was a matter of heart-grief to her that, though she did the work and made out all reports to Presbytery, some man of the church had to sign these reports to make them legal. She could not even be an "elder." Imagine my delight then, on picking up an Eastern paper recently, to see this headline: "Indian Woman Made a Church Elder" ! And reading breathless (for I recognized her picture instantly, even in the blurred newspaper cut) I saw

this paragraph, and blessed my father's church for generous, just, and truly Christian action:

"An Alaskan Indian woman, Mrs. Tillie Paul Tamaree of the Thlingit tribe, 'the most influential native woman in Alaska and spiritual mother of her people,' has been elected to ruling eldership in the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. Mrs. Tamaree, who is commissioned as a lay Presbyterian worker at Petersburg, has been elected by the Native Presbyterian Church at Wrangell, Alaska, to its eldership. Mrs. Tamaree is the first Alaskan woman, it is stated, to be so recognized since the Presbyterian General Assembly at Cincinnati in 1930 declared this office open to the woman membership of the Presbyterian Church. Only a few women have been elected ruling elders."

This woman has never bent or cringed, has never whined or cried out, never broken. Though she has followed truly in the way of "meek and lowly Jesus" and with a due sense of unworthy discipleship, she has held her head high for her new religion, not flexed her knee, not compromised with any inner conscience. She has passed through some very dark deep waters, has known the break of body but never any break of spirit. It is tradition of her people, when sound advice is needed, to "let the old women speak to us." So, now that maiden modesty is past she knows that, being wise and ripened womanly, she has a genuine treasure she can bring of double value—in one hand what is best of all the old, and in the other what is best of all the new.

Like many a classic Pagan, your Thlingit has a negative honor, a negative ethic. *Not* to do dishonorable thing is to be honorable. It is honorable *not* to boast about one's ancestry. The origin of the high-



*Photograph by Bachmann, New York, 1902.*  
TILLIE PAUL AND HER SON WILLIAM.



*Photograph by Fisher, Ketchikan.*  
—AND NOW THE NOTE IN SILVER.

caste Thlingit is so well known all over his own country that he has no need to boast, for his very name places him. It is as though, in Boston, a stranger were announced as Bradford Winthrop Lowell! I've spoken much about the Thlingit caste, because real Thlingit will never mention it themselves; yet its tradition lies behind all of their thought and act and must be known, if springs of doing are to be rightly thought on.

Tillie Paul does not guess it, but I've been hearing tales about her ever since I was a child and listened in my father's study to men like Sheldon Jackson and S. Hall Young tell all the story of their pioneering. "Can you speak the Indian tongue?" my father asked. "No, but I have a fine interpreter—a young Thlingit woman, a very lovely character. Here is her picture."

"She is very beautiful," my father said; and I, looking over his shoulder, never shall forget the straight look of those great dark eyes, that came so honestly at mine. Here was a person, as even a small child could know, who would deal honestly with you. Or perhaps, being but a child, I knew this even better than my elders. We cannot see our ways and I had little thought then that one day that self-same far-away Alaska would be my home too, and her country mine.

As a child I had been deep in history books, for history is story. I read of Romans going into Britain, of Augustine advancing with his cross. It seemed a glorious story. I heard Dr. Young and Dr. Jackson tell of their going North into the Islands, bearing their cross there. It, too, seemed glorious story. My child's history-book had said: "In the year 596 Pope Gregory sent the monk Augustine with a band of

forty followers to teach the Christian faith in Britain. One day, some years before his elevation to the papal chair, he was passing through the slave-market at Rome and noticed there some English captives, whose fair features awaked his curiosity respecting them. Inquiring of what nation they were, he was told that they were called Angles. 'Right,' said he, 'for they have an angelic face and it becomes such to become co-heirs with the angels in heaven.' A little while afterward he was elected Pope, and still mindful of the incident of the slave-market, he sent to the Angles the embassy to which we have alluded. The monks were favorably received by the English, who listened attentively to the story the strangers had come to tell them, and being persuaded that the tidings were true, they burned the temples of Woden and Thor and were in large numbers baptized in the Christian faith."

Russian priests had brought Christ earlier to the Northern Islands, as un-Romish monks had brought Him earlier to Britain; but for strangely similar reasons, much of that previous planting either failed to seed or was plowed under. S. Hall Young was really Augustine to our Alaskan Thlingit. He came alight with the same flame of evangelic zeal, but not with Gregory's appreciation for the objects of this mission. If he had told the Thlingit oftener that they were worthy to "become co-heirs with angels in heaven," and had spoken of them less often as "fiends incarnate," "devils" or "disgusting savages" (as I have heard him sometimes do) I think perhaps some temples of the pagan gods might have crumbled sooner and he himself would not have had so much occasion to speak of our Alaska as "a most difficult mission field." He was a grand brave little



man, whose spunk outweighed his body's weakness; and some of his adventures read, in his dramatic telling (for he was never at a loss for vivid words, a trick he learned from his good pen-companion, Muir) like Saint Columba's own excursion from Iona to penetrate to Pictish King Bude's dwelling, the confrontation of that heathen king at Inverness and ultimate conversion of him. Yet to his dying day, Dr. Young joined with many others of our North in thinking of the Thlingit as mere savages. The Thlingit home-made ethic, all his good art and craft and lore, his truly noble pagan character, his fine Saxon-like pride in manhood and the clan tradition, clan loyalty and honor, were brushed aside as all unworthy—though they were very similar to much that Augustine once found within the Kentish court of Æthelbert.

The Thlingit will not be either made or kept great and noble, by any popular ballot of our own or of their own. They will be kept great by the quiet and earnest living of individual members of their race—individuals such as Tillie Paul Tamaree. The Red Man's burden is, as it has always been, the same old matter of complete misunderstanding because of differing language, manners, morals, laws, religion. Some of The People see this, and see too that the one answer is to accept all the best of white-man way and make it truly theirs, standing on equal feet.

To my mind, that is Tillie Paul's distinction as one of the truly great figures of Alaskan story. She has done well, what few have done at all. Passing by all cheap and tawdry things in our White culture—as a genuine aristocrat who knows values rightly, unblinded by false glitter or show-window label or hawkers' ballyhoo, yet without loss of any

precious parcel of "old custom" she still clung to—she could walk straight forward to the rich bazaars holding the best we have to offer, and say to us: "This I will have, for mine."

*That* the world might view, but not the inner story. What of the painful difficult transition, from one sure key into another? What single silvery note-call, intrinsic in the partial of bright bronze, led out till others followed and acknowledged its clear leadership? Such modulation between unrelated signatures is not made without a passage of harsh dissonance, through groping hesitant suspension, from the old key of simple satisfying music into the final resonance of resolution, orchestral in full color. What melody within the inner ear, unheard yet surely groped for, guided that progression into consonance? What skill to bind, in final symphony of movement, the first sweet simple theme—new keyed and blent now with such masterly perfection into the full ripe chords of power?

So Kah-tlyudt kept her ringing bronze but found the sweetness of a breathing silver. You and I shall never read that volume wherein the modulating passage is recorded, in notes that dint the page with heavy-pointed pencil or blur sometimes in tear-wash. Something we know, and something more we guess at; and from that knowledge and what's guessed at, we dare to leap the chasm always lying between our inmost thoughts and any other's—that terrible gulf that lies between one mind and all the others. No heavy human foot can tread it, nor can we span it for a passage, but for message only: message flung across impalpable strands of softly woven sympathies, to carry miracle of friendship. Somewhat we guess. Yet what were seen?

None knows, nor ever shall know. She will not speak it, yet her life is saga of her people's change—most change where longest, most in contact, with us. When she is gone, it may be sung in story: an epic of the North worth knowing, worth the telling—blending all that has happened in the Northern Islands, to all the tribes, to all the Island Peoples.





# THE ASSAY

GRENDAL WALKS AGAIN  
BRIDGES OF BREAD



## GRENDDEL WALKS AGAIN

WINTER had slipped away, and its outgoing found us "sitting pretty" on the world's rim, very secure in Faraway. Weather was raw; snow held, though darkened now and moist, unlike the clean and brittle coat of our deep northern winter. The ice was yet unmoved on the great River; summer was yet but the substance of things hoped for. And I, who reveled so in the clear, white, dry cold, found these days dark and uninviting, and so kept within.

Then late one afternoon there came a sharp call at the telephone, a quick voice speaking:—

"Are you well?"

"Yes—certainly. Why?"

I recognized the voice of Dr. Gregor, our Scotch Canadian health officer, whom I knew slightly. I was frankly curious but had not long to wait, for his amazing message came almost gaspingly swift, as from a man spent with running.

"Report at the basement of the Catholic Church at six. You are to take charge, as night nurse, of our emergency hospital there."

"But—why—what has happened?"

"It's come. It's hit us. In the last three days nine hundred of our thousand here in Faraway are down with it. They are sending in fifty men from the creek mines, this afternoon. We will put them in the church, with Dr. Towers in charge. You are an officer of the Red Cross, and on your feet. I will

tell Dr. Towers to look for you at six. Wear a gauze mask, saturated in weak carbolic."

"But, Dr. Gregor, I don't know a thing about nursing. I've never even *been* in a hospital. I ——"

"There's death abroad in our camp. I'm nearly single-handed here to meet it. As health officer, I count on you to report for duty." And the receiver clicked down.

—That strange Church of Our Lady seemed a gray and cheerless place, perched on the low bank of the frozen River. Inside, in the half-lighted basement, was pandemonium. Fifty men, on fifty improvised cots, filled the unspacious room. In one sense they were men no longer, but merely terror-stricken children now. For these great husky miners—Scot and Irish, Swede and Dane, Russian and Montenegrin—were, most of them, gigantic bodies who had never known the meaning of a day of sickness. Out of the air had come a brute mysterious Something. It caught and threw them, helpless as in jiu-jitsu grip; it held them there, not only weak and fevered and depressed in mind, but crowded with a panic terror of this Unknown, of the oncrowding shadows in this strange dim room where they had been so herded, stripped protesting, bathed yet more protesting, and thrust with scanty explanation into strange beds, by strangers who were alien townfolk and who spoke a language literally unknown to many of them.

The first glimpse I had at one scared Montenegrin's face reflected such real fear that I tore off the safety mask, realizing that it, at least, must not contribute to the panic horror. With that disfigurement removed, I tried to smile down the man's fear; for, even in this moment of first entry into that dark crypt



which was to prove the scene of so much vigil, I was instinctively agroped for contact. I, too, had known a panic—nothing less—at Dr. Gregor's sharp imperative summons. I was more than ignorant of any nursing art, innocent of the slightest minim of its technique. All the years of my maturity had been spent in lonely, far, and mountainy places where, so God willed, no sickness ever came. And, while I dimly knew that such things were, they had not been for me or mine.

Surely Dr. Gregor realized my gross incompetence—surely some one could be found, by yet another dusk, to tend them capably. I would help—oh! I would help until my fingers cracked from weariness. To help would be a joy, if I were not alone responsible.

The harried woman who had been in daytime charge of this improvised pesthouse, made a short list of things for me to do; and then, disgustedly, showed how to take a temperature, when I most timorously disclaimed knowledge even of that simple operation! She laid out bottles with strange names, with doses to be given under certain conditions (inwardly I quailed, for how was I to diagnose conditions?), and then she said, "Here are the strychnine and the morphine. Give hypodermics, as indicated."

Strychnine and morphine! Maybe you can say those names without a qualm; but to me they were drugs of deadly and mysterious import. How was a person who had but this moment learned to take a temperature (and never did learn accurately to take a pulse) to use intelligently the hypodermic needle?

"Where is Dr. Gregor?" I asked.

"You'll not see him at all. He has eight hundred patients already—don't you know that? Dr. Towers

has charge here, and he's left for the night. He said he'd not be called for anything. He thinks he's coming down with it himself, and I guess he went home to wrap himself around as much old Scotch as his skin can hold. Don't call him, or he'll bawl you out. *I* know him. He said, 'Tell her to just get on the best she can. It's likely that these Serbs and Montenegrins will go quick, anyway.'

That was my first—but not my last—encounter with our Dr. Towers.

Though I was helpless, I found I had two helpers. One was a Swiss prospector who had volunteered for service—sturdy, phlegmatic, a hard-working chap, who spoke so little English that our necessary conversation had to be carried on in scraps of spoken German and written French. He was quick in pantomime, however; and in the weeks that followed he and I did surely qualify as first-class silent movie actors, since meanings we could not convey by signs were literally not worth conveying! Adolphe really was a treasure, with no hard menial task ever beneath him or beyond him.

But the real treasure-find was Dick, my "first assistant"—ex-jockey from Kentucky, and professionally most proficient in manipulation of the needle. When I confided to him my dread of those drug names, and use of hypodermic needle, he threw his head back and laughed outright. "Why, that's the one thing *I* know like the road home!" he cried. "There's lots more to racing, let me tell you, than sitting tight on leather. I can dope or jazz a pony in the dark, and make a neat, clean job of it. I make him win or lose, as pretty! Don't fret yourself about those needles, ma'am. Just wise up little Dick here to the times you want these Bohunks 'shot,' and turn

me loose. I'll dope the whole blame churchful for you, to the Pope's own taste. That's all those names are, ma'am. Nothing to be scared of—just dope and jazz for ponies. I'm your lad who's got the sure-fire trick to all of 'em."

And, what is more, he had! I watched with some anxiety, at first, warning him to be careful, and—having had a deal of practical experience myself with horseflesh—fearing that here the well-known five-times formula for everything that's equine might not be carefully reversed again to human measure. Yet, when I spoke of this, Dick looked me strangely in the eye and answered with a quiet finality: "Why do you think I came to Faraway?"

Dick was not only careful and always cool, but his unshaken realism kept me sane, I think, in those dark nights of mad unreason. And his turfy wit was tonic. Once he had spent a month or so in hospital, laid up there with a broken leg caught in some steeplechase mishap; and being most observant, never fearing to ask questions, he had become a favorite with the internes and had gathered in that catchall head of his the queerest mix of data—which we sorted out together in the long night watches, and found most helpful. This little whip of a man, unlearned yet so resourceful, leaving his blue-grass land "between two days" perhaps thus to escape his own pursuant past, was to become to me a symbol of that true efficiency which the North hammers, freezes, somehow stamps, into all those who will endure it, though they be very outcast.

How it was that first night passed, I never could remember. There remained only a confused sense of my intolerable fatigue, of comfort in the abilities—up to their limit—of Adolphe and of Dick; but most

of all there underlay my own unlimited and overpowering inefficiency.

And well I knew there was no outside help to turn to. That Dr. Gregor had been forced to give a post of trust to one so utterly incapable, was proof enough of the desperate straits to which our little gold camp had already come. The nearest town was sixty miles by river; and that town, as we already knew, thought itself much worse stricken than were we. Its heart was gone, and it was crying out to us for help. Only two trails of many hundred miles (both little used in winter, all but impassable in spring) led to the outside world, and these were over distant ranges which pierced the sky. Not even first-class mail was moving now across that frozen, long, white emptiness. The little coast towns too knew terror, and beyond the coast lay a week's voyage to any city worth a name, whence help might be expected. And what help was there, when even the most skilled found themselves helpless-handed?

We had a thing we called "expecto," another something we called "hex." We had a very limited supply of alcohol, soon to be exhausted; and we had the strychnine and the morphine. "One braces, one depresses. Just give a shot, as needed." And that was all. Yet fifty useful lives of men dangled upon that needle's point of sharp oblivion. Oh, *why* had I not studied medicine—or at least nursing—instead of wasting the good years on histories and psychologies?

That first night had no end, for all the other nights were of a piece with it. When, after multiplied long hours, the day shift finally began to reappear and the woman now in charge said briskly, "I'll look for you again at six," I could not actually believe

it had been only just one night which now was past since I had seen that little town before, by daylight.

Slowly I dragged great swollen feet of lead the few blocks toward my home. The streets were empty and the houses gray and dark. Here were the homes of friends, yet who of them remained unstricken now? I could not stop to ask. I only knew this plague of fear had stalked and caught us, unawares, and I must help to fight it. Yet I could find no cutting weapon to my hand, but only weariness and the too inescapable fact of my own inutility. I slumped down on the edge of the high-built-up sidewalk. Though I could easily see my home, up the street there but a little way, I knew that I could never reach it. The feeling did not frighten me; it just came slowly down, like the invincible screwed application of a great press. No, I could never reach my home.

I do not know how long I sat there. No one passed. Nothing happened, though the day grew larger. Then at last I was aware of something. The sun was now quite high, and something moved; I felt it switch about my feet, and, looking down, saw water. Water was beginning to run in this ditch—water, which these streets had not seen for more than seven months.

If water came, where was our wall of cold, the one sure bastion that we so far knew against these air-blown animalcula? If water came, could spring be far behind its flow? Spring in these latitudes would mean no slow unfolding of green verdure with soft zephyr, but the roar of ice-fed rivers, upheaval of the frost-bound earth, annihilation of all wheel- or sledge-borne transportation; and, in those pre-aviation years, that was all we knew in Faraway. It

would mean two, or possibly three, weeks of violence, cataclysm, danger, and discomfort, even under the best conditions, plus all of the precarious uncertainty that only those can know who have existed in spring flood time at the incalculable riparian mercy of a great river.

Some think of cold as always hostile, but it can be a friend, a very fortress. It can cover the ugly, purify what's tainted, cure and cleanse the pestilent unseen. What refuge could I find now for my men (for they were mine, already) if these slight trick-lets moving at my feet met with a million million more, and the great River rose at last and broke its ice bands, to pour down over and upon them where they lay, in that lower room so often (almost always, I well knew) submerged in a swift flood of ice-in-water and dead muck when the great River heaved and broke and came destroying, with the spring?

I jerked like any puppet to this string, of thought on what might come. I rose and started on, the new fear over-balancing the old. The River trigger-poised its threat, and I knew all too well the menace of that lethal River.

Yet on the second night things went much better. We were getting organized, strung out. The fifty beds began to take on personality and to be charted in my mind, as on my improvised day sheet, with order and some clarity. Obviously, a few were much more seriously ill than others. Somehow we must determine which of our men were on or near to or approaching that unknown danger line, and concentrate our energies on them, trusting that "healing power of nature" I had heard the doctors speak so glibly of to champion those others.

There was still no Dr. Towers in evidence when

I returned that second night, at five this time, hoping to catch him by so coming early and press an answer to the lengthy list of questions I had made. The woman in day charge answered my queries wearily—warily, too, when I begged her to tell me which of the men were really sick—"very sick, I mean."

"They are all very sick, or they'd not be here. Don't you know that?" she snapped. "And Dr. Towers is just where he was yesterday, and says he's not to be disturbed to-night, for anything."

"But, suppose—suppose some one of our men should—in the night, I mean—should ——"

I hesitated—a child before that door jarred open into blackness. She was no child, however, but a woman hardened in the rough of gold camps, wise in many ways and far more competent than I, yet made untender by the sharp-edged bitterness of struggle.

"Are you trying to say 'die'? Well, say it! Everybody dies. You'll come to it, and I will. You can't sidestep it. I tell you, Dr. Towers won't come back and won't answer telephones, no matter what happens. He said to tell you just that. Is that plain? He wants his sleep."

Still I had faith left in my notion: that some must be in more of danger than were others; that we must not spread out our little strength too thin, but concentrate on those in vital need. Since there was no keen, kind physician nigh to give the clue I felt I wanted so, I must build up a Doctor Luke from my own memory and imagination. I tried to reconstruct in vision all the physicians I had ever known or seen, their bedside manner and their personality. I could remember vividly the family doctor of my childhood, whose breezy entrance always brought relief

and joy even before he fairly reached his patient. What secret had he in himself, more rare and precious than the simple drugs he left behind in bottles?

You knew that he was not afraid, no matter what ghost thing might haunt the sick room. And then he made you think of pleasant things. He bucked you up. He made you laugh, if anywise he could, even when you had double mumps and laughing almost killed you. But that was just familiar plain psychology, and not a thing learned only in the clinics. Here, then, were two good firm familiar facts to build upon in all this whirl of strange environment; and Dick's sane horse sense would, I could see already, prove an invaluable third point of support to base us on what was solid and what was real.

So I shook down the little fever-stick with snap and vim that should have pleased a Red Cross nurse, and as I stuck it under the first tongue of this my second evening I began to tell a yarn. It was the funniest story I could think of, and it concerned a mining claim belonging to a Swede this patient very likely knew. One eye upon the watch hand, I told my anecdote. The man's face lighted up, and the thermometer was snatched at last from his convulsive gasping mouth as he burst into chortles of good laughter. For years thereafter he could never see me without slapping his great thighs in glee, roaring in recollection of my Swede story, and joking with me about my cruelty in making sick men laugh! But at the time I reasoned, as I left Bed No. 1, "There's a patient I'll not worry about. He has some fever—yes. But he can see a joke—his spirit is awatch; he'll swing the body part."

Some of the beds were ghastly, though; no fire of



hope struck there. The Irish and the Scotsmen all were splendid, and with but one exception rose manfully to my poor dangling bait of humor. I got down all the names that night, and with the names a wealth of background color. My stories all depended on the names. No need to tell a verbal slang joke to an Englishman, or joke of any species I could find to Russian or to Serb. These last two proved, through all the weeks, to be our hardest problem. Try as I might, I felt I never reached them, for they were hid behind a barrier which I could never break. Their folk-theme was composed in minor key, full of strange intervals and pitched so low my voice could never compass what was written there, beneath those lines and spaces.

The Scotsmen were my brothers, for I am three parts Caledonian myself. In all the Irish too (with that one singular exception, which is our other story) I found a quick response. Not for naught had my great-grandfather been a Dublin man, and perhaps one such upon a family tree is quite enough! The Irish names went down almost *en masse* upon my "plus list," as I called it. The Bryntersons, the Björnsons and the Stojlbergs were a little harder; responses were less quick, eyes were less promptly kindled. And yet luck played me well here, too; for, though I did not know it at the time, later I learned that Dane and Swede, Finlander and Norwegian, each had taken me for kinswoman because I chanced to be so tall and very blonde. Each in his fashion had responded to that fancied call of race, with the rich clannish loyalty so sensitive in Northmen.

I was far happier now, for I was really doing something: testing a theory with the facts, and it was

working. That in itself, while far from scientific medicine, was surely scientific method—wasn't it? I forced myself to put away the thought that men's lives hung upon these kindergarten psychologic tricks of ours, assuming courage that we did not have. Surely doctors could not let their minds dwell on the constant agony of being warden to the gates of death. We must do something of the same, in our so ill-equipped nocturnal laboratory.

Events proved that our procedure had some virtue in it. Ten names went down upon our "minus list" that night; and it spoke well for the precision of our method that nine of those same ten developed cases of pneumonia before many days, and proved to be our real and serious clinic. The tenth was a blond Swede who lay like Siegfried stricken. He made no move for days and days, he spoke no word at all; and always that slow fever still persisted. Then one night as I rubbed him down with some mite of our precious alcohol (I had worked out a heat-evaporation theory, based on remembrance of desert bottles hung to cool beneath the mess wagon) those pale blue eyes caught mine and he looked up and said the only sentence I recall of all those twenty nights and more in which I tended him: "It smells nice." Then and there I put this Endstrom on the plus list, and he did recover.

That second night we saw delirium. I did not know it first for what it was, and tried to reason gently with the Serb's hot and distorted singularity. He must catch a train—he must get up and dress and go. Useless to say there was no train. Useless to say he must not, could not, go. With an unhuman morbid strength he gathered up the draperies of his couch and proceeded, then and there, to go! Dick

and Adolphe could not hold him, though finally we did somehow ram him back into his bed, exhausted. We were worried, desperately, for with all these helpless children to be cared for we could not all three of us stand by through the night and force this mad, hallucinated person to lie quiet.

It was then, in answer to our unvoiced prayer, Saint Gothard came—a tall gaunt French Canadian of few words, great strength, and a way of quiet about him that was better for torn spirits than a dozen strait-jackets or a score of sedatives. The old man just materialized. He had been passing by the Church of Our Lady, so he said, and stopped in to pray, when Father Nunneville had told him of our need.

"Absolutely, take no further thought to this one. I will attend. He shall rest, as little children rest." And looking into that gaunt bearded face of one who in his day had crossed all Canada in the hard train of *voyageur*, we knew that here indeed was ally. And every night thereafter, about midnight—that dreaded hour when Grendel walked again, when things began to go all wrong, spirits to darken, fever-driven souls to slip and skid upon the dangerous ledge of consciousness—Saint Gothard came with his high spiritual assuredness, his great physical strength, and we all breathed relief. He did in very deed care for *mes pauvres petits*; and his slow-cadenced French, which sometimes lifted crooning into ancient song or some absurd old nursery rhyme, again and often brought us midnight benediction.—

*Ma chandelle est morte.*

*Je n'ai plus de feu!*

*Ouvre-moi ta porte*

*Pour l'amour de Dieu!*

So it was that the daughter of a Calvinistic manse looked out upon this alien discipline, saw it close-ranged and under fire, saw it so worthy that she almost envied. She saw the old French priest, himself eaten by fever, worn with coughing, refuse past midnight any aid or palliative lest he break his fast of God. Round and pink and kind as she had seen him heretofore, and thought him soft, she lived to find in him a harder mettle than even in her own keen doctrinarians. They became dear friends, and she drew strength from him, even as she fed him close-up-to-midnight doses to ease his terrible cough. Yet when he would travel sixty miles, by ice and snow and still more dangerous thaw, to say a service over his lost children who had perished there, he would not listen to her pleading, her all but threat.

"Father Nunneville—forgive me—but you are an old man, and we need you here, and you need us. Surely there is enough to do in Faraway, enough of God's lost children here —. You can not, must not, go!"

"But I am nothing, and the work is very much," he said, and went. We lost him, so.

It was that second night Cardoni came. I don't know when he first appeared, but I recall seeing him speak with Dick, knowing he watched me curiously out of that dark handsome face of his, so chiseled, metal-perfect as a Roman coin. I was not surprised to learn later that he was in very fact by birth a Roman and had long posed as an artists' model, until some inexplicable tidal wave had left him, too, high on these northern shores. I wondered at his strange inquiring look, I wondered at his questioning of Dick, I wondered at his sudden leaving; and yet I could not wonder long for there was so much to be

done, and the night hours (though very long, God knew) were never long enough.

Then—I don't know how much time in between—the Roman stood before me as I was making rounds among the cots. He was but one of many shadows, and I hoped that he was helping Dick. I made to pass him, but he stopped me with a strong but gentle hand upon my arm.

"*Signora!*" He spoke low, a mellow Italian voice that dripped like classic honey on my tired mind. "*Signora mia*, but when did you eat?"

I sat down suddenly between the shadowy cots, and thought. When had I eaten? Surely not to-day. What was to-day? Was it to-day now, or to-morrow? When *had* I eaten? I could not remember. And suddenly all of my physical craving, and that weakness which had been so pushed aside and under, came clamoring out. I knew myself a desperately tired woman, and hungry—famished hungry.

"But come," he said, taking my hand and drawing me up on my feet, with courtesy that was like the motion of a *cinqecento* dance, so grave, so gracious, and so full of antique dignity. "But come!"

I came, wondering, and he led me through and out of shadows in the darkened basement, up a short flight of steps into the little room that was our priest's refectory. There was a table set for one—a table with white napery, with silver in its proper order, a table with a little pot of posy bravely blooming on its exact center. I smelled coffee, purring and clucking happy percolation on the little stove there in the corner. A salad built by sheer artistry, from shreds of edible nothingness, flourished beside the silver. And as I was led to the armchair set in state before that table I caught a glimpse, by eye and nose, of

macaroni in the Italian manner simmering on the little heater.

It was too much. I put my head on my two arms, down on that perfect table, and I wept and wept and wept. When that was finished, I wept some more! *Simpatico*, the Roman seized the proper moment in the storm to place the coffee near, to offer the ambrosial dish; and then stood smiling by, white napkin over arm, "to serve *Signora*."

Who was he? Even to-day I know but little more about him, though every night thereafter he still came, bringing some delicacy, and served for us a meal at midnight full of such surprises and refreshment that we of "the graveyard shift" looked forward to his coming like children to Kriss Kringle. Later, when convalescents so desperately needed eggs and milk, and eggs and milk were unprocurable, Cardoni brought them every night in a big covered basket. Fresh eggs, I knew, were selling for five dollars a dozen, when you could get them—which I found I could not; and there were precious few fresh cows in the whole country. Whence came the eggs and milk? But when I asked, he merely smiled and looked mysterious.

"Is it good, the egg, the milk?"

"Good? Cardoni, they are like gifts from Heaven! They make our boys grow strong, so beautifully."

"If the egg, the milk, are from Heaven, then we must speak no more about them." And that was all he ever said.

Do not think that in all these busy nights I ever once forgot my fear of that River, which still quite literally hung over us. Our high small basement windows opened flush upon the snow-bound earth,

and the River always lay there just beyond, bidding its time to rise and gulf us. Always it was on my mind, and so, whenever I could snatch a moment, I would rush out from the dark painful building—with its thick and fetid atmosphere of crowded and infected bodies—and run as swiftly as I might across the snow and down the bank and out upon the River, stamping and pounding there and listening to the sound the ice gave back. Would it hold fast for yet another day of grace?

Rushing in from such a swift reconnaissance one night, I found a caller waiting, the Scotch-Canadian health officer who had thrust me so abruptly into this spider's web. Haggard as he now was, his coming seemed more precious than visitation of the angels! At once I whipped out pen and notebook and began to fire those many questions at him I had been saving up impatiently for Dr. Towers, who never came.

This fighting Scot just smiled at me. He said, "My dear young woman, have you never heard of professional etiquette? I ran in just to see how you, personally, were holding out, because I had detailed you here. Your patients and their problems are Dr. Towers's—their treatment is entirely in his hands."

"But I have never once laid eyes on Dr. Towers! And he has left word every night not to be called, no matter what might happen."

"But he leaves directions."

"He leaves us nothing but these scraps of Latin—and very dog-eared drug-store Latin, too." I showed him then those wandering notes of scattered words, unrelated tags which, if they held any meaning, were in a form well calculated to conceal it.

"I'm a desperate woman, Dr. Gregor. One man

is very sick to-night, and we have others who get delirious at times. As I told you first, I know absolutely nothing of what should be done. I could follow out directions—yes—but I have had no adequate directions. This affair is no tea party; you said yourself it was a fight. Why don't you give me weapons, then—answer my questions? You put me here to keep these men alive, I take it. What's etiquette to that?"

"Show me your very sick man, then," he said, lifting himself up wearily. When we had made the rounds and I had answered several of his queries as best I could, he said, "Now listen, for I want you to remember that I have told you nothing; and above all, you will not be following my instructions. But you should know Maclachlan has a bad case of pneumonia; and there are others very probably approaching it. This, *if I were in your place*, is what I'd do."

And so I took dictation for nearly half an hour, and called in Dick to listen, too, so that between us we should miss no word or overtone. Never were a physician's words more hung upon. I spent most of the night's remainder quilting old woolly undershirts with cotton, for pneumonia jackets. But even that word did not terrify us now, for we had found a friend. On other nights and in those dragging early morning hours we came to dread so, he often came to visit us again, just for a moment's time. Always he would say, "Don't quote me. I'm not here officially. Forget I said that. Do as you think best." But in effect he heartened us immeasurably with his intelligent, shrewd friendliness, his keen, warm interest in our problems of reconvalescence. He was our bank, in our deep gamble with the shadows.

It was the very first night after Dr. Gregor's



first impromptu visit that Dick came to find me, looking really worried.

"Have you seen Maclachlan lately?"

"Not in the last half hour. Why?"

"Well, there's something mighty queer on foot there. I don't get it. He said to me, 'This bed of mine has slipped. Will you put something under it?' Well, sir, I looked. The bed was O. K., but just to please him, for we're tillicums, I tinkered underneath and made as how I'd fixed a wedge there. Just now he calls to me again. 'You shouldn't let my bed drop down this way,' he says. 'It's scandalous. There is a weak place in the floor here. See how the bed goes dropping into it? I'm burnt and sick and tired,' he says. 'How can I rest to-night, with my bed dropping out from under me?'"

"We can move his bed, Dick."

"Adolphe and I just did that. It's what I came to tell you. But there's more behind this. I wish you'd come and see."

It may well be that many of our fifty men had families; if so, however, they were still living back on some old-country farmstead, and we knew nothing of them. Maclachlan's fresh-faced wife and little boy I had myself met and remembered well, one time when they had come in from the mines; and so, although I never had seen him before, my sharp anxiety for this man wore a double cutting edge.

On the hot pillow the man's hotter head lay rolling, restless, black-gray hair matted to damp curls. As friends, for many wakeful nights, we had been talking of that wife and son, the creek where he had been out prospecting, his neighbors whom I knew, and all the little daily normal gossip with which I tried so hard to tie these frightened children back to

everyday, and be a link with all their known and homely matters of firm fact. But as I came and sat beside Maclachlan's bed, in its new place, he looked up at me strangely and he said, "What is your name?" I saw then that the man I knew no longer lay there, but another. So I answered, "My name is Mary."

"Are you the Mary living in this house?" It was a child's voice asked it, not a man's.

"Yes, I am living here. Tell me what I can do to make you comfortable, so you will get a good night's rest."

"My head is hot."

We got a relay of fresh pillows and I arranged to keep them airing always in a window. We began to slip the cool ones underneath that feverish head, in endless series. Then after a short time he spoke again.

"Is Mary there?"

"I'm here."

"Please do not let me drop down so. Can't you see how I'm slipping? Oh, Mary! I'm afraid! I don't know what is down there."

Reaching quickly from the low bed's head where I stood, I caught my two hands underneath his armpits and drew him up, until he knew that I was holding tight. "You can't drop any more, for I am holding hard. You know I'm very strong. You can't slip, now." I motioned with my head to Dick and he brought pillows. I knelt upon them at the bed's head, never relaxing that hard human load. All was quiet, and a long time passed. I whispered up to Dick what he must do of my night's work. After a time he came and whispered back, "You can't kneel like that much longer. It'll most kill you. He

seems quieter. Perhaps he's sleeping. Let him go, easy."

But the first moment that the tension was the slightest bit released, he cried out, "Mary! I am dropping. *Please* don't let me go!"

And, as I did so many times again all through that night, I answered, "You can't drop any more, for I am holding fast. You must not be afraid, for I'm right here."

For hours and hours I held so, hours and hours. Sometimes I spoke, perhaps by some word's point to break through to the treasury of his will, and help to draw the man's too fearful soul back from that shelving edge that slipped so close beneath us there, into impenetrable darkness. Again there were deep pools of silence and of crowding dark. Long after, as a murky streak of dawn began to light our lower chamber, Dick woke me, for I had at last fallen asleep, so. I found myself all covered up with blankets, and he had piled big pillows underneath and round me. My arms were dead and useless, my back seemed absolutely broken; but the man apparently slept.

When I came back next evening I looked first to find Maclachlan, but he was not anywhere in the large room. I was frantic until at last I found him in the little room just off the priest's refectory—found him waking, gray eyes alight and friendly as they had been before.

"Hello!" he greeted, feebly but with a real show of cheer, in answer to my worried look. "They brought me here to-day. They say I've passed a sort of turn, and now I will get well. But where were you last night? We boys all missed you."

"Why, I was—I was taking care of a little boy."

"I hope the child is better now," he said, with a grave interest.

"He is," I answered. "Thank you."

"Then please don't go away again. The boys feel better, in the night, when you're just kind of walking round. It is so—dark."

That was a sweet cup, and I drank it gladly. God knows I needed the good brace of it. But what was that he said about the shadowed night? Did they, too, know that Grendel walked the hall, seeking to snare some there?

The human mind knows times when shapes, long hidden, force their way across the threshold; and in those long nights of frenzied effort, dark and misshapen fancies crowded into consciousness, like the stir of black-winged bats. I do not know how much the inner brooding upon our physician's unnatural desertion of us, the foul air that would not be removed, the fear of the impending River, the continued ever-growing sense of our own weakness, our strength-account so daily overdrawn and not recouped, the deep emotional as well as physical fatigue, the spiritual torment of unbearable responsibility which must be ever carried, our loneliness within the night and the late night's unnatural depression on the mind—how much all these, and more, were ground and basis to the phantom. But of a truth, as surely as I knew myself to be there, I had seen Grendel in that hall; and I could only call the image of the horror I had seen by that grim name.

Surely you remember Grendel, who was God's savage enemy, accursed monster of all joy bereft who would come nightly from far hollows where he dwelt amid wolf-haunted fen paths, to feast himself upon the blood of thanes who lay asleep in Hiroth-

gar's hall. By some unholy power he held a spell that turned all man-made weapons. A baneful, horrid, shadow-haunting Grendel seemed to walk among us here, proof too against all human skill to turn his grisly arm, which snatched at sleeping men to do them death-sick hurt; and dire enough our need for mighty hand-grip of an epic Beowulf now, to stay that lethal arm and cleanse our own good hall of this malignant Thing.

As I went ever up and down between those men—slowly, silently, on measured feet, lest I disturb those sleeping there—something, Something, hid forever in the shadows, watched its time and waited. Almost, but never quite, I saw it face to face; but slantingly I saw it always, and all the long night long I knew it to be surely there. Ever on padded foot it stalked in grim and shadowed silence to choose its kill, what body next of all our men to put its baleful claw into.

Then one night I returned to duty and was told that Grendel's claw had reached at last and, despite all our care, had clutched and taken Greenwood, our quiet and courteous old Englishman. That tired, tried prospector had climbed the last dip in the kloof and looked out now on what had always lain behind the ranges, always called there. The day-shift merely told us, as they went so wearily away, that Dr. Towers officially had given the death notice, and sometime in the night the undertaker's men would come.

For a long time I could not bring myself to face the actual fact of it, for I had never looked upon the aspect of the dead. Then finally I forced myself to do so, knowing I could not save my self-respect and at the same time cheat in this last service, useless though it was. So, after all the necessary ministra-

tions to the living, I went alone into the little entry-way where they had fetched his cot. I made a light and stood and looked a long time at the thin tired body of the wander-footed Englishman. This, then, was death, which wrote its "30" to the rough draft of our human story.

But who had called it so? This imprimatur had been Dr. Towers's, that yet unseen practitioner who, in my own distorted loneliness, had come to wear a more malignant mask than even the plague's self. He called it death—but who was he to name a thing with accuracy? Surely I had not found his word so true in small familiar things that I should take it as inerrant now, in this last ultimatum which mattered so tremendously. The undertaker's men were coming. Yet, what if Dr. Towers had borne false witness here, as in those other well-remembered countless matters, better not now recalled?

The face that lay upon that pillow was all tinged with blue, the hands upon the cover were ominously quiet. But as I looked, and looked, and looked again—was it the high-swung light which rocked upon its cord in simulated pulse beat? Was it the sharp cool cut of a revivifying night-air drawing through the semiheated corridor? Or was it but the shadow of my own refusal to believe that made me know, now, there was life here?

In terror of my almost criminal fancy, yet in a truly frantic haste, I sought out Dick—my good horse-senseful Dick—and told to him some part of what I felt.

"Oh, gee! I say—the old he-devil—now, I wonder! Rats! It can't be!" But he came quickly back with me into that quiet entryway.

"Dick," I said, "do you know any law forbidding

'shots' for dead people? If you don't—if you'll dare do it—I wish you'd give him, now, just such a shot as you would give a horse to make it win a race. If he is gone, then surely we can do no hurt to what is left here. But if there's any spark of something flickering, perhaps—just maybe—we could fan it up. No one must ever know, just you and I. But if you do not want to do it, Dick—if you'll show me how, I'll do it; and I'll take the blame, if any comes."

I think he scarcely heard me speaking, for he was looking so intently at the figure on the bed. Then he went nearer and bent down, and listened long there. He felt about the chest and at the throat, he put his head close to that other's; and when he did look up his eyes were gleaming.

"By God, woman, I believe you're right! There *is* some sign of breath, or I'm a liar." And he ran swiftly for his needles, and the thing he called his "jazz box."

Can you imagine what joy mixed itself with horror when, secretly as friendly ghouls, we sought in the next hours with all our feeble ingenuities to galvanize this once authenticated corpse to life again? There was no visible immediate result to our first efforts, and I, discouraged, said to Dick, "We've given all we've got." But quick as horseflesh he came back with, "Yes, but thoroughbreds give more than they have got. It's what a man will ride for. We're not extended, yet." And so through all that length of night we drove our flagging wits with merciless lash, that we, in spite of our gross handicap, might somehow steal from that ghostly rider on the pale horse this race of his so very nearly won.

There came a time when we could see a motion underneath the cover of Greenwood's bed. There

came a time when we decided we might venture giving drops of milk with alcohol. There came a time when we dared quietly lift the cot and carry it back into the inner room again. And last there came a time when (by God's favor, late) the grim men with their wicker burden came and knocked, but found the shadowy corridor untenanted and were sent forth with empty hands—to spread a wonder in our Far-away, of miracle which came, even in death, to those who sheltered under that gray roof-tree. But we who mingled faith and work there knew it for but another twist we'd given Grendel's savage arm.

Next morning as I went off shift I stood again by Greenwood's cot and looked down at him; but this time he was looking back at me. I forced myself to negligent calm and asked this newly risen Lazarus of ours, "What will you have for breakfast?" With a queer huskiness he answered, "Ham and eggs I like best." Then with apology, "I have an asthma, that do give me turns, and all but shut my wind. I think I had one last night. My throat do be almighty tight this morning."

So Greenwood had come back to us, for keeps; but the night's work cost us our precious doctor. That pretty story of a miracle did not long outlast the other fancies which the plague had brought. When our clean northern air again blew reason into a healed camp,—after some hand much stronger than our own had held the great and curdled River back, far past its usual break-up, until every last man of all our fifty came up out of that crypt alive and well again,—then laughter was a natural reaction to the tale of Greenwood's "death." And laughter is the very cruelest weapon. Stronger men than Dr. Towers have fled before it.



And we of Faraway, who drew deep breath again now that old Grendel walked our hall no more, knew a quite bearable regret when, with the first down-river boat, Dr. Towers quietly pulled up stakes and left us.



## BRIDGES OF BREAD

**Y**OU must not think we had forgotten laughter, though—good hearty Saxon laughter, healing laughter to react from horror—even while Grendel yet stood hip and shoulder by. It may seem incongruous, it may seem callous, but I must tell you that we knew innumerable laughter, even then. Funny things will happen even while Death stands swinging wide his door, and funny things did happen. So, for our health of mind, we laughed.

That very first night when I came to this strange church, the day-nurse said to me, "Of course, a lot of these 'black fellows' will very likely die." This saying hadn't been the most auspicious introduction! Yet, while I realized only too well my own abysmal ignorance of medicine or nursing, among the few things which I *did* know were some lessons in psychology, as learned from those three great good teachers of my girlhood, James and Royce and Münsterberg, in that now-so-far-distant university. So, when I saw the frightened looks of these sick men, I did know just enough to realize that fear and terror were no proper atmosphere for any healing of them, and somehow fear and terror must swiftly be removed. That's why I laughed.

I laughed out good and strong, and I've a mighty ringing laugh—one learned in camps of men, on mountain-tops, and not a quiet-pitched lady-laugh more suitable to drawing-rooms. At the first sound, a quick electric change swept over that dark room.

Not a head on a pillow but turned in swift expectancy and interest toward the door; and in that instant, as I later learned, I had made fifty friends! Poor lads, they had been so depressed and sorry for themselves; and now most of them—all those not gripped already with that fell pneumonia—took heart and thought (or so they told me afterward): "Why, this can't be so very bad, or that new nurse who just came in would never laugh like that!"

Perhaps my laughter meant more because it was in church, where all should have been solemn-like and laughter was a sacrilege. But lovely Catholic legend says that Mary Mother cared for and rewarded with her special grace, even the juggling Fool who could but do his simple tricks before her altar. So we, who had no knowledge and no skill, found our first service in rich laughter.

Had not the old French priest been praying at the altar there, just now, that healing might be somehow given? Perhaps some kindly spirit brooding over that strange church had touched all-knowing finger to my funny-bone. I do not know. But I do know that, once having learned the goodness of it, I thought: "Here's *something* that I have, when I thought I had nothing. By the Eternal, then, I'll use it!"

So I told funny yarns, all I could rack my wits to think of, whenever I found men not too far sick to listen. One was M'Innis, the Irishman I spoke of, who guffawed so at the tale I told him on our second evening, that the church rafters fairly rang and Our Lady of Tenderness, standing in Her niche there, must have rocked dangerously! It was good luck for me, because to see this man's rare cheer helped me go on; and I was surely one scared

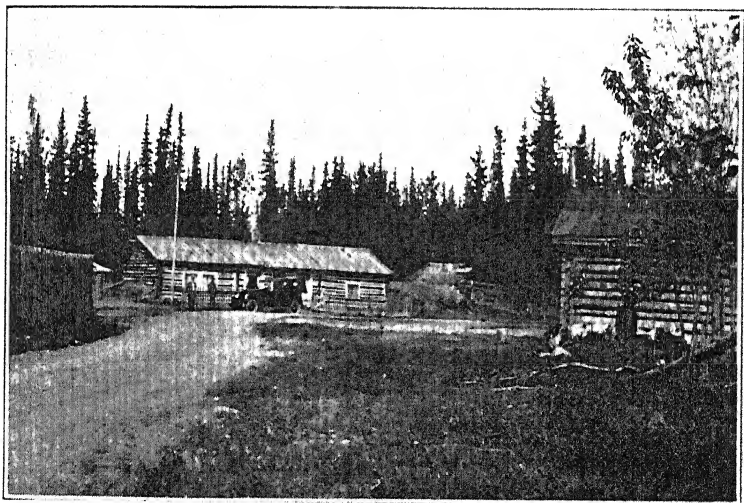
woman, with all this strange and new responsibility upon my shoulders.

There was a queer dénouement to that laughter of M'Innis, the huge Irish bridge-foreman. When our long weeks of fever and delirium were over and all our men were up and well again, each one came to me, some with wet eyes that had not wept for long hard lonely years, and each man solemnly declared that I had saved his life. Anything thereafter he could do for me, I had but to ask! I had not saved their lives at all, of course, for they got well in spite of me and my ineptitude: got well because predestined so to do; because of their big healthy bodies, unabused; or through some power or skill *we* surely did not have, which they could get a spiritual grip upon. But, anyway, they said all this, and at the time no doubt they meant it—just as any man on leaving any hospital, bids farewell to his nurse feeling in his heart that he will never, never forget; and yet in two weeks' time he can't recall her name or (a more vital insult to a woman!) the color of her eyes.

Years after, I was taking a dear friend and her companion, out to the Coast from Faraway. They had come to our sub-Arctic town that summer for a long-promised visit to me, and we were now driving a car the four hundred miles of military trail to catch the boat for Seattle. It was a good enough trail, if nothing happened; but something usually does, in our far country! We had left our log road-house of the night before (there is no town in all that distance, but only an occasional wayside cabin) very early in the morning, so that we could cross the smaller glacial streams before the sun was up too high, and they had grown high with it. The largest



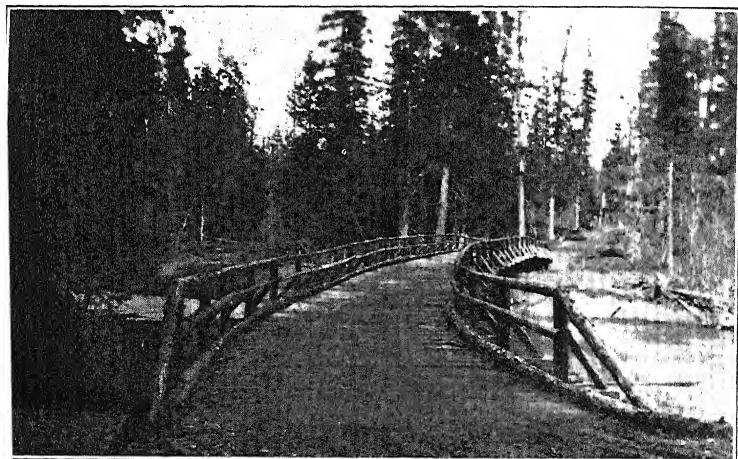
A CHURCH IN FARAWAY.



*Photograph by Cann.*  
"WE LEFT OUR LOG ROAD-HOUSE OF THE NIGHT BEFORE."



"THE FIRE HAD LEFT ONLY BLACKENED STUMPS OF THE BRIDGE-SUPPORTS."



"BRIDGES OF BREAD WERE BUILT FOR US."

stream that we must pass that day was bridged, I knew—a low wooden bridge nearly a quarter of a mile in length. In these summer latitudes, of course, we have no night of darkness at all but only a few midnight hours of rosy mingled sunset and sunrise, with light enough to read by the whole night through.

Leaving the road-house cabin about three A. M. we crossed successfully the treacherous glacial waters, so milky curdled white, after first wading them to test for tricky pot-holes which could so quickly break a wheel or axle. Emerging from a long-since fire-blackened wood, we reached the lengthy bridge-site over that widest stream. Then suddenly we threw the brakes, until they screamed! There was no bridge, at all. A forest fire had swept the opposite bank the day before. We had seen smoke, I now recalled, but forest fires were a familiar thing and I had thought but little of it. The fire had licked across the low-built wooden bridge and burned it clean down to the water's edge, leaving only the knobs of blackened stump supports exposed above the waterline. When flame had reached our side, it found no fuel in the already burned-over area, and had been lost. But not before this damage had been done.

I think I never knew a more complete sense of bafflement, than when we swung that curve and came upon that ruined bridge-head. Here we were, in the midst of the mountains, two hundred miles from any village, and no bridge. It was still fairly early, not more than six o'clock; but this wide river was already high and I knew it to be full of quicksands. It *might* be forded with the car, but I very gravely doubted this. For myself, I'd chance it. But should I venture in, with these two cheechakos, and risk

their lives in it? Yet they must catch that boat. It was an impasse. My friend had hinted that she thought my years spent underneath the Circle had made me just a little mad! Certainly queer, and not with normal judgment any more—too willing to take chances and to gamble with the elements, as pioneers must always do. Should I take *this* chance?

As I sat there debating in my mind, I saw what looked at first to be a great and hairy ape, blackened with soot and grime, huge and unkempt, burst from the burnt wood on the other bank and start to wade the river. As he came nearer and we watched in fascination his stumbling advance, tossed by the swift icy waters now waist high and now shoulder high, suddenly as he staggered out upon a bar midway and stood a moment so exposed, a giant of grime and smoky river-muck—I knew him! With a loud cry I left the car and flew down to the bank where he would come to land; and as he came up out of that cold stream we rushed to meet each other, clasping hands and slapping one another violently upon the shoulder, in good familiar sourdough greeting.

It was M'Innis, my big Irishman, the bridge-foreman. They had been preparing to replank this bridge, he said, and the cut lumber had only last week been piled there on the other bank. Unusually warm days had flooded the river and the planks had become damp and wet but, by good fortune, had not floated off for he himself had stayed nearby and anchored them to trees. After the flood had subsided, just yesterday there came this fire. He had been through the burned area that night, to see if all his precious planks were still safe. And they were, thanks to their former thorough wetting.

"I'm looking for my bridge crew, now, most any



time. They were to meet me here, this morning. I hear a motor on the grade, this minute. Do you?"

I did. "How long to build this bridge, again?" I asked.

"Three or four days, I figure. Why?" He grinned at me, through soot and grime, a smile that flashed.

"See here," I said, as I grinned back, "you said once that I saved your life, and you'd do anything for me. Did you mean that?"

"I said it and I meant it. Excepting that you're a cruel woman, to make us sick folks crack our sides that time, with all your tales, you're the best-ever nurse a man could have. What do you want?"

"I have two cheechakos with me, in the car there—dear friends from back home, who must be at the Coast to catch the boat. We've got to cross this stream, to-day. Can you get us over?"

"I can," he said. "You'll cross this day, I promise you."

We did! We sat upon the bank and watched, while my black giant worked there like a demon, himself a beaver generalissimo, amphibian, mad with energy. His crew were soon imbued with the game spirit, to get us over, somehow, in the soonest time. Wading waist-deep, they set new caps on all the burned-off posts, and those black lonely woods reëchoed to the scream of saw and rat-tat of swift hammer stroke, the morning long. By shortly after noon, the bright new caps were set and stretched across the flood like a twin row of giant stepping-stones.

Then, carefully, they placed two twelve-inch planks which reached out from the bank to the first pair of uprights. Cautiously we drove the car out

on them. The tread exactly fitted, if one kept absolutely steady helm. As we advanced, men went ahead wading the stream, and laid down for us other planks to overlap upon the post-caps; and gave us careful warning of our course, sighting from underneath—an inch here, a hair's turn left, there. By two o'clock we reached the other bank and whizzed away for tidewater, across the wide unpeopled hills again. It was a glorious extemporized bridge-building.

—At least, that's how it seemed to me. But my companion out of long ago had seen another picture. That night she said to me:

"Mary Lee, when I saw that terrible black giant burst from those smouldering woods and breast that stream, and saw you rush to meet him and clasp hands there, in some strange intensity of greeting—as though you had been sib and kin in some black spirit-world—I thought you suddenly had gone stark raving mad! He seemed the incarnate spirit of all evil.

"But when he called up other spirits from the earth and they began with fiendish energy to build a bridge for us—though *such* a bridge!—then I decided it was all pure magic, and he the powerful slave within your Nordland lamp."

I knew, then, how surprising strange all this proceeding must have seemed—to her, so uninitiated in the secrets of our Arctic brotherhood. And she knew nothing, too, of all those weeks within that grim-walled church, when we had fought with shadows and with fear, there. How could I tell her of that time? It was too long a tale, for now; and sleep was dulling mind and body, both so tired from the hard day's exertion. So I said drowsily, "Our bridge to-

day was really made of bread—just bread, that's all, cast long ago upon this water and forgotten. It's very simple. I told this man a funny story, once, and made him laugh. And so—he built a bridge for me.”

Then, from the swift and startled look she gave, I saw she thought that I was *surely* mad!

Bread cast on water that way never seemed to mold, but formed a very wholesome fare whenever it came drifting back to us, in unexpected places and odd times. In fact, throughout the years that followed our great epidemic, in all our prodigal far wanderings across the length and breadth of that great country, whenever we got into some tight jack-pot of a situation and wondered how we were to manage, my seven-eighths would say: “Don't worry. One of your flu patients will turn up pretty soon, tell you how you saved his precious life, and then proceed to pull us out!” It really did seem as though bridges made of bread were built for us, on many a lonely trail. There was, for instance, the case of Nickolov, one of our Montenegrins.

I don't suppose that many in our camp, when speaking of the “black fellows,” realized that strictly this referred only to men of the “Black Mountain.” The term had come to be generic and meant much more, locally, than merely Montenegrin. These Balkan patients, when I tried to talk with them, gave me back looks that were bulging-eyed as frightened rabbits! You might have thought I was a wide-mouthed grinning fox, intent to gobble them. That's how they made me feel, at any rate.

One night our Spasoe Nickolov turned berserk, threw his covers off, leaped from his bed and started for the door, declaring in his smashed-to-pieces English that Saint Gothard (who was watching his de-

lirium) was bent on poisoning him. Dick, Cardoni, Saint Gothard, Adolphe, all were needed to force the madman back to bed and hold him there. The "black men" were so much afraid of me as woman, I had learned by now, that I had kept away lest I alarm him more. But what were we to do? Sit on him until morning, and he die from the exhaustion of his fighting? We had already given him as many shots of calming drug as, in our innocence, we dared—without a doctor's special order. And there were all the other very sick men, waiting on our care, who must be tended.

After we had improvised with safety-pins and blanket a way to hold his lower body firm upon the cot (but feared to strap his chest down, lest we stop his breathing) I called to Dick to leave the other three to watch. Under the pinky-blue and golden Virgin Mother in her niche, we went in conference.

"Dick, can't you think of something?"

"I can't. I have. There's nothing left but leave him kill himself, I reckon. If it was a horse, though, I'd know what to do."

"Dick. You've *said* it!"

"Said what?"

"Listen, Dick! If it really were a horse, and in such fear of something over there that he was just about to kill himself in terror—you know just what you'd do. Why, even *I* know! I'd make him so much more afraid of something *here*—I'd dig so deep in him with spur and crop—he'd jump clear by and clean forget that left-hand thing, in greater panic of that other.—Wouldn't he?"

"Why, yes—of course a horse would, for he's got a one-track mind."

"But Dick, perhaps that's what this man has.

Let's clear that single track, with a stiff shot of TNT."

"I don't get you."

"You will. Come on! And when I'm through, then give him just a sixth of morphine. Here goes! For James, and Royce, and Münsterberg." And rolling up my sleeves, I started toward the Montenegrin's bed.

"I don't know any guys like Royce and Münsterberg. You look to me like Sharkey and Fitzsimmons."

"My dad was champion boxer once, of twenty colleges—and I'm his eldest son!" I called back. "It's an experiment, in horse psychology!"

I hurried down the aisle between the cots, flexing my arm and tensing up my fist. I whirled around in front of Spasoe Nickolov, where our three helpers struggled still to hold the fighting "black man."

"Stop!"

They jumped back startled, but the Montenegrin was more startled. I towered above him and thrust down that doubled fist until it nearly touched his face. He sank back to the pillow and I pushed my whitened knuckles further, glaring at him with the best "fighting face" that I could make.

"Do you see that?" I hissed. "You will take every drink and every pill Saint Gothard gives you—do you hear me? You will lie quiet and still upon this bed, or—do you see this fist? I'll smash you, like a fly. Do you know what I mean? If you don't, I'll show you. But I think you do.—Now, *do* you?"

"Yes-s-s," he stammered. "Yes-s-s."

"See that you do!"

The man lay still, just like a small gray mouse, all night; and though his eyes rolled white whenever

*I* came near, he took his pills and water and, in due time, he quite recovered! We never had a whimper from him, afterward.

Now that affair of Nickolov built a bread bridge for us, though in a very different and quite unexpected way.

Years later, when my seven-eighths and I were coming back from the Kantishna, late in the evening of our return to the fringes of settlement we finally reached a small construction camp, on what was later to become the railroad grade. We were wet and cold and a desperately hungry pair, for the last bite of grub had been eaten that morning.

We asked the man in charge if we could have a hot supper, by any chance, as we were literally exhausted. He said his cook was a most violent-tempered "black fellow," who would fly off the handle if asked to do the slightest thing out of the regular routine. The men who sat about, playing cards and smoking, agreed with him. "Cookie's a killer," they all said. "He blows up at a touch. He's like straight nitro. He'll never cook you anything, at this time of night. We'll rustle you some cold grub from the cache, though, to last you until morning."

But we were both so hungry, chilled, and tired. Then, too, I had learned by now that no true Sour-dough can refuse a woman, if she asks politely. And so, in spite of their reiterated warnings, I thought I would try woman's luck with this formidable cook! While the whole room full of men stopped in their games and sat there, tense, expectant, I knocked upon the kitchen door.

It flew open instantly—fairly exploded in my face. I stepped back swiftly. Into the brightly lighted

room, against the background of the darker space beyond, there flashed a picture I'll not soon forget: A little Montenegrin, black and glowering, one hand all wet with dripping blood, the other waving a huge meat cleaver. We later learned that "Cookie" had been cutting steaks for next day's breakfast; but this mild and domestic fact we did not know, in that dramatic moment! He was wild-eyed and, after all I'd heard of his fierce temper, I trembled in my heavy boots and the request I was about to utter stuck in my throat. I could not make a sound.

Then, suddenly, I recognized him. It was Nickolov, my flu patient—the man whom I had threatened to "smash like a fly," if he'd not take his medicine! I never did have such a twinge of conscience in my life, as in that moment. Here was the man, waving a meat-axe, his hand adrip with blood. And here was I, a helpless stranger—at his mercy, now, as he had been at mine.

I backed away, keeping my eye upon him, and reached a hand behind me for the outer door. My husband has since told me that my face was, at that moment, the funniest expression he had ever seen—utter amazement, fear, and a queer look as though to say: "This IS a joke on me, and no mistake!" For he (who did not recognize the man, of course) had no real inkling of my actual feeling; but I would cheerfully have backed out into that cold mountainy night, alone, if I could only thus escape that wild look of my one-time patient, the threatening edge of that uplifted cleaver!

Then the blade clattered to the floor, the man rushed forward. Before I could escape into the friendly night, he gripped my hands in almost savage power, his face all lighted with a perfect radiance

of pleasure. Still holding both my hands, he turned to the astounded boys who sat there, mouths agape.

"You see this lady?" he cried out, in shrill excited voice. "This lady save my life! She sister to me. I very sick, in Faraway, so long. She sister to me. This lady save my life!

"Where you come now, to-day? The Sable Pass? You hungry, cold—so tired? You want some eat?—You like sheep steak? You like po-tate? You like bean soup? Ice-cream-hot-coffee, yes? I make.—You see this lady, boys? She sister to me. She save my life!"

In a few moments we were sitting down to such a feast of good things, my poor half-starved interior portion could not well believe the news my nose was sending down to it. To cap the climax, Nickolov had just been making an enormous freezer of ice-cream for the next day's Sunday dinner, and as the last of steaks and coffee disappeared, he rolled out this huge freezer into the common room where all the men were treated with us to great heaping plates of fruity cream. And if you don't know just how good a mix canned peaches, pulped, will make with a custard of dried eggs and powdered milk, then you should try it!—All this was to a constant litany of "this lady" and "she sister to me," until I thought the words would never cease.

Of course he had forgotten that stiff threat of mine, of long ago in Faraway. Now that my conscience stopped its pounding, I realized that all the happenings of that (to me so-well-remembered) night had been in *his* delirium. No doubt the sane man, well again, had never even heard of it but only treasured in his lonely memory the fact that, in his convalescence, a woman tended him.



So this emergency was also bridged with bread—and bread with fancy sugar trimmings on it, too!

But that affair of Nickolov had yet another repercussion for, like a lucky billiard-shot, my threatened "punch" had ricochet which hit another and long dormant ball and stirred it into strange activity. When I look back upon it now, it seems to me that Shayne's awakening (with all his subsequent bestirring of himself, to touch the vital spark in other men who lay about him, sick there) was probably the turning-point to health in many a lad of our half hundred flu patients. Shayne's rough-edged wit and scrapping spirit touched many a tired soul whom I could not enlist.

That night within the church when, at my wits' end, I had rashly threatened Nickolov, I turned away from his cot very pleased, feeling that here was one good job, at least, would not need doing over. But—in the very next cot to the well-scared Montenegrin, Shayne lay. And something very wrong indeed was happening, even now, to Shayne. He had been the only one of our half-dozen Irish patients who, from the very first, had yielded not at all to any blandishment of humor but lay, consumed with fever, drenched in deadly night-sweats, weak and listless and uncaring. An Irishman who would not put up any fight, a Clare man who cared nought for living—it was past me; and daily he was losing ground. In fact, he had been given up for lost.

His bed was next to that of Nickolov, and as I turned from threatening the "black fellow" I noticed that Shayne's cot was shaking and strange sounds like sobs were coming up from it. "God's mercy on us," thought I, "he's surely lost now, if he has another of those wretched chills—with no dry

sheets to-night, no extra blankets. Shayne's quit, that's what. He *wants* to die. And now he's sobbing."

I leaned above the bed. Strange choking sounds came through, from under Shayne's high-piled-up covers: a gurgling, gasping, most peculiar sound, suspiciously like—what? I leaned down closer; then, in anger and in sharp reaction to my long deep worry for him, snatched back the covers from about Shayne's head and found—what I had suddenly suspected! He was convulsed with laughter, helpless hysteric laughter. Baby weak as he then was, he shook with it; and Irish eyes that had for all those nights been listless, danced with a genuine light at last.

"Shayne!" I cried out. "What does this silly laughing mean?"

"Oh!" he gasped weakly. "Oh! and would ye *do* it, now?"

"Do what?"

"Why, bash him one—the wild black fellow over next. Ye said ye would, an he'd not take his pellet."

"Of course I'd do it!"

"Oh! 'Twas a fine grand eye-full!"

He choked, and weakly dug again into his pillow. That night he slept, a tired child's sleep, and instantly began to mend. Soon he was out and well again! And so, you see, our horse psychology—applied—had cured two men.

At least a year after that time, a mutual friend told me Shayne's own high-colored version of those nights. It is the best of jokes on me; but, too, it shows up other aspects of our vigil; so I must tell you, just as it came to me.

"I was a-layin there," Shayne said, "not carin

any, for this plague had ate my vitals out, ye'll see. I was just choosin in me mind, I was—was this as good a night as any, to drift out in. For there seemed nought or little held me longer to this port of Far-away; and I'd as lief cast off, and drift—and chance, that other.

“The little black man, there next by, was actin most jo-mighty queer and rarin like d.t. I never seen 'em, worse. All our old Frenchie and the horsy lad could do, to hold him to his bed. Belike they'd summonsed her to quiet him, for she came runnin down atween our cots. The skirts about her were a-flyin wide with the swift rush she made, and she was rollin back her sleeve like any fightin man. Herself is a big woman, as ye know, but lively on her feet, like. When she was standin there above the black man's bed, she must have looked a giant to him, out of old far times, I'm thinkin. And her voice was queer and different, so I listened.

“She says: ‘Ye'll take what ye are told to take. Ye hear me? Or I will make ye over, with this fist, I will—yer mither will not own ye, for the change I'll make.’—And well the bunch of us could see, she meant to learn him there some hospital-like manners. By hook or uppercut, if needs be!

“I'm tellin ye, it fair did take me, that. This lady, and the punch she packed, to scare the lad to mind her. And *all to once* the joy of grippin things comes whelmin like a burst of flood, all over me. And with it all, the dash-ed queer unlikely jest of this. So I must stick my good-for-nothin head into that pillow, by—and near did burst my rotted sides, with laughin.

“Then she did rate *me*, good and stiff, for all the pain and worry I had caused, by quittin on her—

and now, that I did laugh! And when she'd left, I turned this over in me mind.

" 'Shayne, man,' I says, 'look how this lady rolls her sleeve, and bends the fist of her, to put the fear of God into this scrawny black man here, that's nothing to her, like. And here are you, the dirty coward—you that was raised a proper man, to know the insides of the church and school—you lie here like a pantin hare, forespent, that whinges underneath some hedge, and wait on God's old white-tooth hound to snatch and finish you. I asks ye, Shayne, and must ye lie and moan, abed—till some wee woman would be learnin ye to fight?—God's shame to ye.'

"So, after that, I was a well man, soon—when I had got aholt myself again. And after that I kept my eye out and one ear pricked up, to learn what went on in the nights. And soon I saw this woman—all alone she was, no other woman by—was half a-crazed with worry lest we die on her, and she blame *her*-self for it. So, in the day, I'd speak to one and other of them, lyin near, to pass the word along that we were men, ye see, and should by rights be scrappin our way out; and not lay down and quit—as I, the rogue, had all but gone and done.

"Then one night, when she thought we slept, she came and stood close by, where there's Our Lady set into the wall. I had one good ear out and more than half an eye peeled, crosswise; for I was thinkin it was queer and strange, it was—knowin this woman Protestant—the *why* she came, and stood so long, before Our Blessed Lady. Then she did say (May I get pardon for the tellin it)—she said, as bold as brass, as she might talk to *any* lady there: 'Now, Mary, listen to me. We are the only women in this

place, and *we must stick together*. Do you hear me?’

“Sure, first I thought it saucy of her, such talk. And then I did bethink me: ‘Poor soul, she’s only ignorant, like, and doesn’t know the proper way to fair bespeak the Queen of Heaven.’ All through that night I waked, and said me good fine prayers. And proper prayers they were, too, by the book—though I was forced to lie in weakness on me back, in bed there. Before much harm was done, I got my say in; and did bespeak Our Gracious Lady privately, besides—my business being personal.

“‘Sweet Lady, sure you know (For in yon high grand place, there, you must-can peep down fine intill hearts of things here)—these stiff-knee Protestants were never learned to pray, at all, nor how to properly address their Betters. This woman that just spoke you out of name, is a well-meanin body and she has a kind heart to her. But she is ignorant, My Lady, and clear distractit with the worry piled on her. You, that are full of mercy, sure will understand she meant no harm, at all.

“‘Now, for myself, Sweet Lady—I have changed me mind about, since speakin with ye, last. I do not wish to enter Paradise, just now, savin your grace. I have a bit or two old score to settle up, right here in Faraway—I’d clean forgot, and will be busy at.

“‘But for whatever lad herself is frettin for, the night—whoever ’tis—let *me* make supplication for him, as many as you’d say belike are needful.

“‘And Blessed Lady, Mother of All Tenderness—do, for dear Christ sake, put some *fight* into him!’”



ONE WORD MORE





## ONE WORD MORE

**B**EING a woman, I must write a postscript to all this windy gossip I've indulged in, about my neighbors, friends, companions on many a far-blown trail. Yet it was not a woman, but a man, who added *One Word More* to round out *Fifty Men and Women*; and I have borrowed from him. In "The Thlingit" I have used that *One Word More* as theme song, so frequently and in so many phrases that I could not stop to pockmark with inverted commas. Lovers of R. B., please forgive me! But lovers of R. B. don't need that asking.

In other places and at other times I have told other stories of many of the friends included here. *Uncle Sam's Attic* and *Alaska the Great Bear's Cub* are full of Muk-pi and of W. F., of Grandma, Alec, Tillie Paul and Fannie Quigley, for I have written only of the folk I have known best and longest. It was through them I came myself to know Alaska, and so through them I hoped you too might come to know her. I haven't told of any great outstanding figures, famous beyond the Territory's self, but simply of our "run-of-mine" Alaskans (as the engineers would say)—grab-samples of the people: just as a miner takes a bit of ore here and another there, to average the value of his pay-streak. We have our heroes, but our heroes have their headlines. I have known heroes, too, but heroes are too strong and heady diet for daily meat and wine. The homelier virtues are pleasanter to live amongst!

I wished to tell you of the unsung folk, of mine

and camp and trap-line—scattered folk who make the land worth living in. Nor have I told of those who came here for heroic reasons, transported by prepotent zeal or the explorer's gadfly urge which is so inexplicable to others. They have their reward in doing what they most desire to do. My people are just those who came for simple work-day reasons, who wear no heroes' trappings and whose hearts are not uplifted by the glory or the exaltation of great causes: just folksy folk of every day, with elemental human gifts and virtues. These are the stuff our great Schoolmistress North takes into training, hardens with lessons of aloneness and afarness, tests with her sudden sickening-swift emergencies.

"It is the land where anything might happen." Some one said that to me, when I myself first came into The North. She added—"And generally it does!" Yet, though we fear, we come to love that stimulant of constant testing. Shayne's prayer was only the unvoiced real daily prayer of all of us who are Alaskans. We see life on our Last Frontier as necessary worth-while *scrap*, and so we pray to have some fight put into us! If you love only easeful untried living, never come to our High North. You will not like it.

A few of these Alaskan friends once found their way into the welcoming pages of *Scribner's*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The North American Review*, but wished to gather here again with their old Fairbanks neighbors. In many cases, I have kept real names of people and of place. Sometimes, for reasons you will guess, they have been changed. But all are factual stories of the actual folk living within the North within my day, and most are of my own and intimate friends.

I could have told of scamps and scoundrels—yes. But why? They have been over-done in all Alaska fiction and have helped create false pictures of the Building of the North. Empires aren't raised on rolling stones but on square-cut embedded character. I have known scamps, but I assure you that they don't predominate in any true Alaskan tally. Are there no scamps in your town? Yet if you wished to give a true impression of the people there, you would not tell either of heroes or of scoundrels but of its honest builders: patient men and women with a mite of vision tucked somewhere about their duffle, some little touch of faith, some bit of courage. On such a settled ground-course the ultimate empire-building rises. Our very dreams are mortar to the stonework.

We are Alaskans. We are neither demi-gods nor demons, but human folk with human foibles, very human cares. Yet there is something great in the land's self, that tempts men to a greatness in themselves here. This is the inner secret of our love for her, that in her devious way, some time or other, she has been generous in giving us our chance to do a bigger or a better thing than we had done before, or guessed we could do. Often we fall far short of all she asks us, yet most of us have cause to love and thank her for her constant testing assay. We are Alaskans, and Alaska still remains The Land Where Anything Might Happen.



















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